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92 VOL.2

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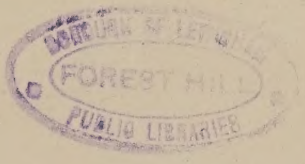

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From a coloured etching by Richard Dighton.

GOING TO WHITE'S.

(William, Lord Alvanley.)

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THE *BEAUX* OF THE REGENCY

By LEWIS MELVILLE

VOL. II

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PART II (*continued*)

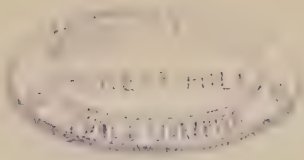
BRUMMELL AND HIS TIMES

CHAPTER XV

"THE EXILE OF CALAIS" (1816-1830)

From an etching in Jesse's "Life of Brummell."

GEORGE BRUMMELL AT CALAIS.



CHAPTER XV

"THE EXILE OF CALAIS" (1816–1830)

BRUMMELL went no farther than Calais, where he put up at first at Dessein's, immortalised by Sterne, but at this time passed into the hands of Quillacq. "Here I am *restant* for the present, and God knows solitary enough is my existence; of that, however, I should not complain, for I can always employ resources within myself, was there not a worm that will not sleep, called *conscience*, which all my endeavours to distract, all the strength of coffee, with which I constantly fumigate my unhappy brains, and all the native gaiety of the fellow who brings it to me, cannot lull to indifference beyond the moment; but I will not trouble you upon that subject," he wrote to Tom Raikes on May 22 1816, soon after his arrival. "You would be surprised to find the sudden change and transfiguration which one week has accomplished in

my life and *propriâ personâ*. I am punctually off the pillow at half-past seven in the morning. My first object—melancholy, indeed, it may be in its nature—is to walk to the pier-head, and take my distant look at England. This you may call weakness; but I am not yet sufficiently master of those feelings which may be called indigenous to resist the impulse. The rest of my day is filled up with strolling an hour or two round the ramparts of this dismal town, in reading, and the study of that language which must hereafter be my own, for never more shall I set foot in my own country. I dine at five, and my evening has as yet been occupied in writing letters. The English I have seen here—and many of them known to me—I have cautiously avoided; and with the exception of Sir W. Bellingham and Lord Blessington, who have departed, I have not exchanged a word. Prince Esterhazy was here yesterday, and came into my room unexpectedly without my knowing he was here. He had the good nature to convey several letters for me upon his return to London. So much for my life hitherto on this side of the water. As to the alteration in my looks, you will laugh when I tell you your own head of hair is but a scanty possession in comparison with that which now crowns my

pristine baldness; a convenient, comely scalp, that has divested me of my former respectability of appearance (for what right have I now to such an outward sign?); and if the care and distress of mind which I have lately undergone had not impressed more ravages haggard and lean than my years might justify upon my unfortunate *phiz*, I should certainly pass at a little distance for *five-and-twenty*."

Brummell soon removed from Dessein's, where the charges were not suited for a light purse, into rooms in a house owned also by Quillacq and after a few months settled down in apartments belonging to Mons. Leleux in the Rue Royale. He had a drawing-room, dining-room, and bedroom on the first floor; but after he had been there five years, took another suite, with a dining-room on the ground floor, and drawing-room and bedroom above, the advantage of which was that it had a private entry from the street.

It has been said again and again that Brummell was dishonest in money matters, but this is a harsh judgment that should be tempered with mercy. That he raised money when he had no immediate prospects of paying is not to be denied, but the usurers had no objection, for they were

careful to obtain other signatures to the bills. It has commonly been supposed that this matter did not weigh upon the Beau's mind, and that, once he was out of the country, he troubled no further about the losses incurred upon his behalf. This, however, was not so, and it was this thought that impelled him to speak of his troublous conscience. Indeed, the very first letter he penned at Calais was written to Lord Charles and Lord Robert Manners, who had been his sureties, and in this he not only expressed his grief, but made such restitution as lay in his power.[1]

"Calais, *May* 18, 1816.

"Dear Lords Charles and Robert,

"Persecuted to the worst extent by those to whom I was indebted; without resource, or even the hope to evade or protract the execution of those menaces which, I was well assured, would have instantly been enforced against my personal liberty; I have been driven to the only alternative yet left me upon earth—that of quitting my country for ever. I am, indeed, most sensible, most acutely so, of the heavy wrongs that such a step must inflict upon those who from their former friendly regard for me were induced to impose upon themselves a future charge for my immediate assistance. I will not endeavour to palliate the past or present—such an endeavour would be vain, and only, and justly, prove

[1] The letter is now printed for the first time, by permission of Mr. L. Godfrey-Turner, the owner of the original.

an aggravation of my misconduct. I have no extenuation to advance, beyond the desire to retain the only blessing, if such it can be called, still within my reach—which is personal freedom—and even that I would voluntarily have yielded, could I have felt assured its surrender might in any way have exonerated you from the trust in which you have been involved on my account. The responsibility would still have existed the same on your parts, had I forfeited myself to a gaol.

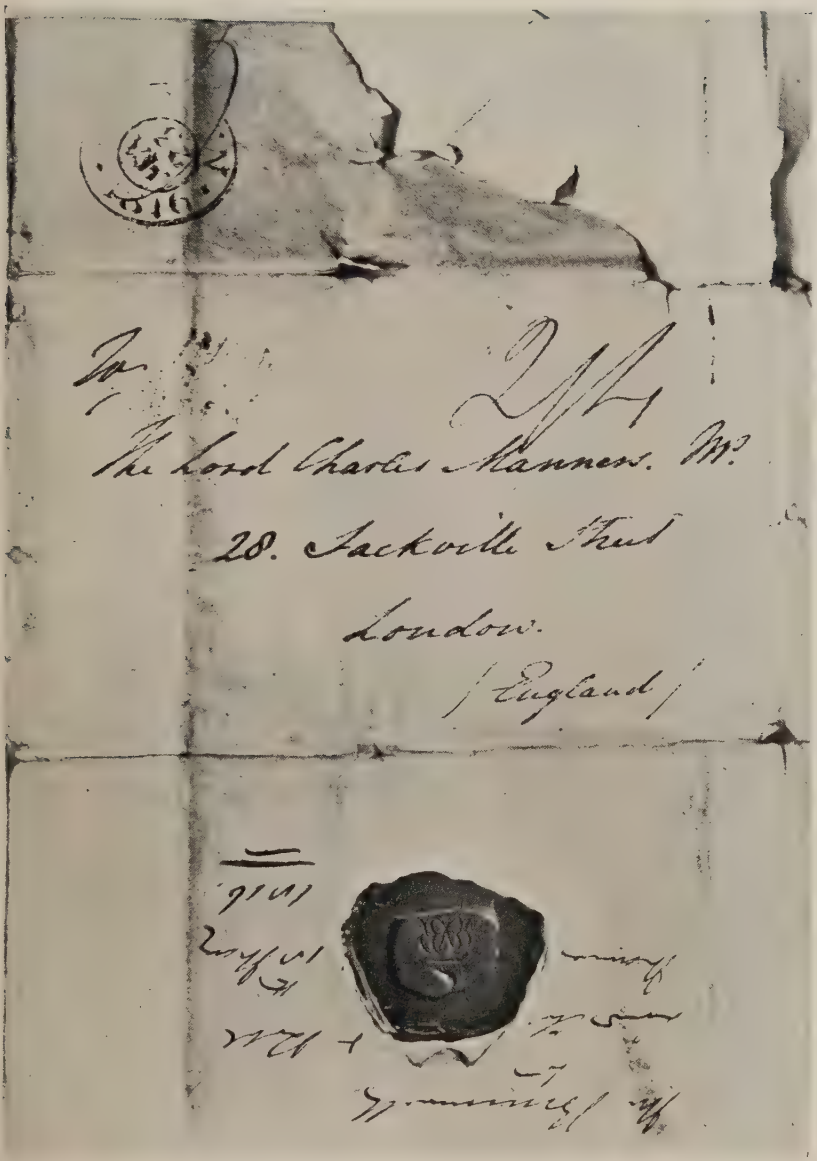
"In acknowledging my obligations to you, for great they are; and in lamenting my inability to repay them; I still feel anxious in the wish to realise the promised power of future remuneration. It was very far from my deliberate intention to retire to another country, and encumber you with the responsibility incurred for my service, without even indemnifying you from risk in the event of my death by insuring my life, but that would now have been of no avail, for my departing from England would have annulled the policies. It was the pressure of circumstances which compelled me to adopt so precipitate, and, I will say, so disgraceful a measure at the exigence of the moment.

"The last remaining hope of my broken fortunes consists in a considerable sum of money now vested in the Court of Chancery, which must ultimately become mine. The reversion I abandon legally and willingly to you—it is the last proof of honourable feeling I can leave in your hands, to show that, though unfortunate and inconsiderate, I am not destitute of strong feeling and gratitude towards those who have been so seriously my friends.

"Whatever construction you may place upon my past conduct, I trust you will do me the justice to believe that in this last act of retribution I deprive myself of every worldly support—I abandon my country a beggar, and I can look forward to no means of subsistence beyond the year—yet I feel some remote satisfaction in the idea that the slight reparation I am offering is everything that is left to your former friend,

"GEORGE BRUMMELL."

This letter was manly, and there is no reason whatever to doubt the writer's sincerity. If subsequent generations have felt indignant with Brummell on account of his behaviour to his friends, his friends themselves, who, no one can deny, were in a better position to judge of his conduct, felt no grievance against him. When he had fallen upon evil days, there was scarcely one of the circle that loved him—that dandy circle which ill-informed writers invariably set down as heartless—that was not faithful, or did not place his purse at the exile's disposal. Indeed, his intimates literally supported him, endeavoured to get him a place or a grant, and, after twenty years' separation, and innumerable demands for pecuniary assistance—for the Beau had no knowledge of how to earn a living—were as loyal to their leader as in the days of his greatest prosperity. Brummell was, indeed, one



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PORTION OF THE ENVELOPE OF BEAU BRUMMELL'S LETTER TO LORD CHARLES MANNERS, SHOWING BRUMMELL'S SEAL.

Calais.

May 18th 1616.

Dear Lords Chancellor and Robert.

Persecuted to the worst extent by those to whom I am indebted, - without redress, or even the hope to check or obstruct the execution of those measures which, I am well assured would have instantly been enforced against my person and liberty, I have been driven to the only alternative yet left me upon earth. That of quitting my country for ever. I am, indeed, most sensible, most acutely so, of the heavy wrongs that such a step must inflict upon those who from their former friendly regard for me are induced to impose upon themselves a future charge for my immediate assistance. I will not

endeavour

to facilitate the past or present such an endeavour could be vain and only, and justly, prove an aggravation of my misconduct. I have no determination to endeavour beyond the desire to obtain the only blessing, if such it can be called, still within my reach, which is present freedom, and even that I would voluntarily have yielded, could I have felt assured the surrender might in any way have exonerated you from the trust in which you have been involved on my account. The responsibility would have still existed the same on your parts, had I precipitated myself to a goal.

In acknowledging my obligations to you, & your kindness, and in lamenting my inability adequately to express them, I rest

Yours &c

the promised power of future remuneration. It was very far from my deliberate intention to retire to another country, and encumber you with the responsibility incurred for my service, without even indemnifying you from risk in the event of my death by insuring my life. but that would now have been of no avail for my departing from England would have annulled the policies. Such the pressure of circumstances which compelled me to adopt so precipitate, and, I will say, so disgraceful a measure at the exigence of the moment.

The last remaining hope of my broken fortunes consists in a considerable sum of money now vested in the Court of Chancery, which must ultimately become mine. This remains I abandon legally and willingly to you. it is the last proof

of

honorable feeling I can claim in your breast to shew that though unfortunate and inconsiderate, I am not destitute of those feelings and gratitude towards those who have been so seriously my friends.

Whatever construction you may please upon my past conduct, I trust you will do me the justice to believe, that in the last act of retirement, I deprive myself of every worldly support. I abandon my native country a beggar, and I can look forward to no means of subsistence beyond the year 1st. I feel how vain to satisfy you with this idea, that the slight reparation I am now offering is every thing that is due to your former friend. George Brummell

of those favoured few who remain unspoiled by a success that would have turned most men's heads, and not all the blandishments of society affected his demeanour. "Who that knew him well could deny that, with all his faults, he was still the most gentlemanly, the most agreeable of companions?" asked Raikes. "Never was there a man who during his career had such unbounded influence, and, what is seldom the case, such general popularity in society." Probably Brummell himself never realised how great had been his influence and popularity in London society until he had fled to the Continent.

Lord Alvanley, Lord Worcester, the Earl of Sefton, the Duke of Argyll, and the Dukes of York, Rutland, Richmond, Beaufort, and Bedford, Lord Ward, Lord Stuart de Rothesay, Lord Jersey, and Lord Willoughby d'Eresby never came to Calais without visiting him. Wellington, indeed, had had some quarrel with him, but a friend brought about a reconciliation, and thereafter the Iron Duke never passed the Beau's door without a visit, or leaving an invitation to dinner. The Duchess of York, who had always been attached to him, sent him various trifles—a worked table-cloth, a purse, a card-case, from each of which fell bank-notes. Brummell returned the royal

lady's devotion, and worked busily at a pictorial screen which, being unfinished at her death, he put from him with a sigh. He also gave a more practical proof of his feelings for her.

At Calais he began to compile his memoirs. Standish told Lady Granville in 1818 that at Belvoir he had seen a letter from Brummell to the Duke of Rutland announcing the immediate publication of his autobiography. "Brummell says," so stated Standish, "he sets everything in it at defiance in revenge of his wrongs, that he discloses to the world every anecdote he has heard, everything that has come to his knowledge in the intimacy of friendship, and that those who have thrown him off he shall treat with the utmost severity."[1] That the rumour was widespread in English society is clear from several of the memoirs of the day; while Croker has a reference to another alleged scheme of the exiled dandy: "Beau Brummell," he says in his Journal for December 1818, "is going, or says he is going, to publish an English Journal at Calais, which alarms some great folks, and it is said the French police have been requested to look to it. I hardly think he can dare make such an attempt—he only wants to be bought

[1] *Letters of Harriet, Lady Granville.*

off, but surely no one will buy him off. I had heard some time ago that he was writing memoirs of his own life; this is likely enough and may have given rise to the other report." [1]

It is, however, doubtful if Brummell ever did more than contemplate the work of writing his reminiscences, and certainly he never did more than make some notes. "By-the-by, much talk in town about Brummell's memoirs," Moore wrote in December 1818; "Murray told me a day or two ago that the report was that he had offered five thousand pounds for the Memoirs, but that the Regent had sent Brummell six thousand pounds to suppress them." Rumour was, as usual, a lying jade, for the Prince did not send any money; and Murray never got beyond having some idea of going to Calais to treat with the Beau. However, at least one London publisher made a definite proposal of a thousand pounds for the book; but although this arrived at a time when Brummell was in great need of money, he refused the offer, to the great surprise of Mons. Leleux, his landlord, who, after many inquiries, succeeded in extracting the reason for this act of self-denial.

"I promised the Duchess of York," Brummell told him, "that I would not publish any notes

[1] *Croker Correspondence*, vol. i. p. 123.

of mine during the lifetime of George IV. or his brothers; and I am under so many obligations to her, and have such a deep respect for her generous and amiable conduct to me in our early friendship, and since, that I would rather go to gaol than forfeit my word. She is the only link that binds me in this matter."

Brummell was doubtless thinking of his old friend, the Duchess, long since dead, when he said to Mons. Godefroi, a fellow-prisoner at Caen, where he was imprisoned for debt: "I have letters of the royal family, of Lord Byron, and others, the sale of which would produce me more than sufficient to pay my debts; but I will not part with them, for I should compromise several families." How compromising they might have been may be gathered from the fact that when several of Charles Molloy Westmacott's notebooks were offered for sale in the catalogue of Mr. Thomas Arthur for December 1868, it was stated that in one of them was recorded an account of a conversation between George IV. and Brummell on the night of the Prince's marriage, indicating the cause of his estrangement from Princess Caroline, which account, it is stated, was obtained by Westmacott from the Beau.

At first Brummell lived in retirement at Calais,

and, as he told Raikes, his "personal communication at this place is confined to Mons. Quillacq, his waiter, to a domestic upon trial (whom I firmly believe to be le Duc de Castries in disguise), and to an old *abbé*, who daily instructs me in the French dialect, at three francs an hour." It is certain that he succeeded in acquiring the language better than might be supposed from the story told of Scrope Davies, who, when asked what progress the Beau made in his studies, responded, that he had been "stopped, like Buonaparte in Russia, by the Elements!" Byron put this pun into *Beppo*, and declared that this was "a fair exchange and no robbery," for Scrope, said he, "made his fortune at several dinners (as he owned himself) by repeating occasionally, as his own, some of the buffooneries with which I had encountered him in the morning."

"Crushed was Napoleon by the northern Thor,
Who knocked his army down with icy hammer,
Stopped by the *Elements*—like a Whaler—or
A blundering novice in his new French grammar." [1]

There were persons better qualified to judge of Brummell's progress in the language, and among these was Barbey D'Aurevilly, who, *à propos* of

[1] *Beppo*, stanza lxi.

Scrope Davies' pronouncement, commented : " *C'est trop que cela, mais c'est une plaisanterie. Il resta, il est vrai, incorrect et Anglais dans notre langue, comme toutes ces bouches accoutumées à mâcher le caillou saxon et à parler aux bords des mers ; mais sa manière de dire, corrigée par l'aristocratie, sinon par la propriété des mots, et ses manières de* gentleman *irréprochable, donnaient à ce qu'il disait une distinction étrange et étrangère, une originalité sérieuse, quoique piquante, et qui n'existait pas à ses dépens.*"

When Brummell was able to converse in French, he affected the society of the better-class French residents, and would have nothing whatever to do with the English living in that town, who were, indeed, scarcely desirable acquaintances, being in many cases men and women who had fled in fear of the law from their own country ; while he had the utmost contempt for the average tourist from " Albion," as he affectedly referred to the land of his birth.

" I hear you meditate a *petit domicile* at Paris for your children : you cannot do better," he wrote to Raikes in 1820. " English education may be all very well to instruct the hemming of handkerchiefs and the ungainly romp of a country dance, but nothing else ; and it would be a poor consolation

to your declining years to see your daughters come into the room upon their elbows, and find their accomplishments limited to broad native phraseology in conversation, or to thumping the 'Woodpecker' upon a discordant spinet. You will do well, then, to provide in time against natural deficiencies by a good French formation of manners as well as talents; and you will not have to complain hereafter of your gouty limbs being excruciated by the uncouth movements of a hoyden, or of your ears being distracted by indigenous vulgarisms."

Indeed, there is less exaggeration than usual in Bulwer-Lytton's humorous description of Brummell's attitude towards the English on the Continent. "I like my residence pretty well; I enjoy a calm conscience and a clean shirt: what more can man desire?" he is made to say in "Pelham." "I have made acquaintance with a tame parrot, and I have taught it to say, whenever an English fool with a stiff neck and a loose swagger passes him—'True Briton—true Briton!' I take care of my health, and reflect upon old age. I have read 'Gil Blas' and 'The Whole Duty of Man'; and, in short, what with instructing my parrot and improving myself, I think I pass my time as creditably and as decorously as the Bishop of Winchester or my Lord

of A—v—ley himself. . . . [Paris is] full of those horrid English, I suppose, thrusting their broad hats and narrow minds into every shop in the Palais Royal—winking their dull eyes at the damsels of the counter, and manufacturing their notions of French into a haggle for *sous*. Oh, the monsters! they bring on a bilious attack whenever I think of them; the other day one of them accosted me, and talked me into a nervous fever about patriotism and roast pigs: luckily I was near my own house, and reached it before the thing became fatal; but only think, had I wandered too far when he met Me!—at my time of life, the shock would have been too great; I should certainly have perished in a fit. I hope, at least, they would have put the cause of my death in an epitaph—'Died, of an Englishman.'"

Certainly Brummell never mixed with the English residents at Calais, until his friends, Berkeley Craven and Henry Baring, having fallen upon evil days, came to live there for a while. Sometimes, however, he was inveigled into an acquaintance with some vulgar soul who would not be repulsed, and his horror at his good-natured weakness being exposed resulted, in one case, in an amusing incident.

He was walking with Lord Sefton, when a

rather common Englishman bowed to him. Sefton looked at the Beau in surprise, but the latter turned the tables.

"Sefton," he said, in tones of great surprise, "what can that fellow mean by bowing to you?"

"To me!" said the peer, nonplussed. "I thought he was bowing to you, for I know no one in Calais."

The fates were unkind to Brummell, for the man passed again, and this time did not content himself with a bow, but seized the great man by the arm, crying, "Don't forget, Brum, don't forget: goose at four, Brum—goose at four!"

Brummell's life at Calais was simple and regular. He rose at nine, and, after a simple breakfast, glanced at the papers, or read books, except on Monday, when he prepared his snuff for the week. On that morning his valet brought in a pot of green tea to moisten the mixture, which was then placed in boxes with a paper-knife. At noon he retired to his dressing-room, where he occupied himself with his toilet until two o'clock, at which hour he held a *levée*. At four he strolled on the ramparts, walking at a very slow pace, so as not to distress his fat dog, Vick;[1] and he returned to

[1] Brummell was very devoted to Vick, and when one day the dog was ill and had to be bled, he was very upset. "Bled!" he ex-

his apartments in the Rue Royale in time to dress for a six-o'clock dinner, which meal was sent in from Dessein's. In the evening he went sometimes to the theatre, or, in summer, might sit in the garden writing letters, or reading. We have it on the authority of Major Chambre that Brummell spent a great deal of his time with books, and that he was especially fond of *Mémoires*, with the result that "he was well acquainted with all the phases of society in France, more particularly from the time of Louis the Fourteenth, and it gave a great interest to his conversation whenever he entered upon the subject."

Brummell was still as careful about his attire as in the days of his affluence, and it was laughingly suggested that he might do worse than increase his income by giving lessons in the art of dressing to his continental friends.

"There goes a French dandy: oh! Dick, unlike some ones
We've seen about White's, the mounseers are but rum ones.

claimed: "I shall leave the room. Inform me when the operation is over." When some time later Vick died, he was deeply grieved, declared bitterly to M. Marshall that he had "lost the only friend he had in the world," and shut himself up for three days. Vick was buried by his devoted master in Dessein's garden; and was subsequently replaced by three poodles, one of which, Atous, is occasionally mentioned in his letters.

Such hats! fit for monkeys; I'd back Mrs. Draper
To cut better weather-boards out of brown paper;
And coats, how I wish, if it would not distress 'em,
They'd club for old Brummell from Calais to dress 'em."[1]

At Calais, the ruling passion still strong within him, he found a poor tailor and patiently taught him the best English cut, until "out of a very indifferent ninth part of a man he made a very rich one."[2] Moore, when he visited the Beau in 1821, and dubbed him "The Exile of Calais," saw the fine silver appointments presented by the Prince of Wales set out on the dressing-table in his small bedroom, eight feet by nine; for even when Brummell could no longer spend money on his clothes, he was careful to be well-groomed.[3]

Adolphus Fitzclarence[4] and Lord William Pitt Lennox, passing through Calais about this time, invited him to dinner at Dessein's, and the latter recorded his impressions of one whom he had always

[1] Moore: *The Fudge Family Abroad.*

[2] Grantley Berkeley: *My Life and Recollections.*

[3] "The common and received idea of him in England was that of a consummate dandy. I found him, on the contrary, a quiet, gentlemanlike man, without pretension, apparently about fifty years of age, and exceedingly agreeable. He was in his usual morning costume, a dressing-gown and gold lace cap, which he invariably wore in the earlier part of the day."—Major Chambre: *Recollections of West-End Life.*

[4] Lord Adolphus Fitzclarence (1802–1856), a son of the Duke of Clarence, afterwards William IV., by Mrs. Jordan.

regarded as something akin to a hero. "Poor Brummell looked pale and emaciated, his still well-fitting clothes were what is usually termed 'seedy'; his boots were not so brilliant as they used to be when he lounged up Bond Street, in his days the fashionable promenade; his hat, though carefully brushed, showed symptoms of decay, and the only remnants of dandyism left were the well-brushed hair, the snow-white linen, and an exceptional tie." [1]

The ties came from England, frequently a gift from his old friend and imitator, Raikes, to whom from time to time the great man wrote amusing letters. "I am persuaded you had no hand in the mutilation of the muslin that was sent to me. No, I said, he never in cold blood could have been guilty of this outrage. The fault then rests with that vandal Chapman, who, in the attempt to exculpate himself, has added a lie to the previous offence, for, according to all the rules of geometry, two triangles will form a square, to the end of the world; and of equal triangular proportions are the kerchiefs in question. The intention you profess of sending me some square pieces assures me you are in good-humour."

Such good-humour deserved reward, and it was

[1] Lennox: *Celebrities I have Met.*

bestowed in the form of advice, which Raikes took seriously enough, but which, it is to be feared, was written by Brummell with his tongue in his cheek. "I heard of you the other day in a waistcoat that does you indisputable credit, spick and span from Paris, a broad stripe, salmon-colour and cramoisi. Keep it up, my dear fellow, and don't let them laugh you into a relapse so Gothic as that of your former English simplicity."

Brummell was as amusing as ever, and certainly his reverse of fortune did not make him less insolent.

When Lord Westmorland invited him to dinner at three o'clock, "Your lordship is very kind," he replied, "but I really could not *feed* at that early hour."

Wellesley-Pole came over to Calais, and the Beau met him as he landed from the Dover packet. "Why, Wellesley, you appear cold!" he greeted the new arrival. "But I am not surprised at it, for you must have been devilish *hot* in England, or we should never have seen you here."

"Brummell, have you heard the news?" an acquaintance called to him one day, in great excitement.

"No; what's the matter?"

"Why, S——, the banker, ran off last night."

"Well," said the other nonchalantly, "what of that?"

"Why, I have lost ten thousand francs!"

"Have you?" he said carelessly. Then he changed his tone to that assumed by the wise man when inculcating a moral lesson: "Then, my good fellow, in future take a hint from me, and always keep your banker in advance."

It was the Beau's habit to wander down to the Quay when the packet was due, and then, when curious friends, who assumed he must know all Englishmen, would pester him with inquiries as to who this was and who that, he would draw on his imagination, and assure his interested hearers that this one had been "butler at Belvoir," that one had "kept a snuff shop in Bond Street," and so one. Some of Brummell's biographers, with distorted vision, have seen in this a further proof of his snobbishness, but in reality it was nothing more than a somewhat puerile amusement. One day, however, this pastime nearly led him into trouble: he described as a hatter a Peninsular officer who had lost his nose in the war. The soldier came to hear how he had been labelled, and, calling on Brummell in a fine

frenzy of anger, assailed him in no measured terms.

"I am sorry, very sorry, that any one should conceive it possible that *I* could be guilty of such a breach of good manners," the Beau said, with impressive dignity. "I can assure you that there is not a word of truth in the report."

The officer, of course, expressed himself satisfied, and, apologising for the heat of his tone, moved to the door.

Then Brummell, with a twinkle in his eye, added reflectively—more to himself than to his visitor: "For, now I think of it, I never in my life dealt with a hatter without a nose."

The supreme example of Brummell's wit remains to be told.

"My dear Brummell," said an Englishman on his arrival at Calais, with great heartiness, "I am so glad to see you, for we had heard in England that you were dead; the report, I assure you, was in very general circulation when I left."

Quick as lightning replied the penniless, exiled Beau: "Mere stock-jobbing, my dear fellow, mere stock-jobbing!"

Brummell had desired to be made consul at Calais, and there seemed some chance of a vacancy,

for Marshall, the occupant of that post, was in ill-health; but he rallied, and lived for another score of years. Brummell's friends wished to do something for him, but it was not easy; and the Beau had some faint hope—in which, however, he scarce dared to indulge—that good times were coming when the Regent ascended the throne.

"He is at length King," he wrote to Raikes when the news of the death of George III. reached him. "Will his past resentments still attach themselves to his crown? An indulgent amnesty of former peccadilloes should be the primary grace influencing newly throned sovereignty; at least towards those who were once distinguished by his more intimate protection. From my experience, however, of the personage in question, I must doubt any favourable relaxation of those stubborn prejudices which have, during so many years, operated to the total exclusion of one of his *élèves* from the royal notice: that unfortunate —I need not particularise."

"You ask me how I am going on at Calais," he continued in the same letter. "Miserably! I am exposed every hour to all the turmoil and jeopardy that attended my latter days in England. I bear up as well as I can; and when the mercy and patience of my claimants are exhausted I

shall submit without resistance to bread and water and straw. I cannot decamp a second time."

George IV., however, showed no intention as King to befriend those with whom he had quarrelled when Prince of Wales; nor in the days of his prosperity did the generosity of his soul evince itself in deeds of kindness towards those who had fallen into adversity. Soon after his accession the King went to Scotland, and then came the intelligence that he was about to visit Hanover and would stay a night at Calais. Though Brummell showed no excitement, there can be no doubt that his pulse beat the quicker after receiving this piece of news; and if he thought it possible that George would extend a friendly hand to his erstwhile rival, at least he was not the only one who credited the King with a nobler mind than he possessed.

Brummell, who had never been a toady, had no intention to thrust himself upon the King's notice, and they might never have seen each other, but that the Beau, having been out for a walk, on his return was unable, owing to the density of the crowd, to cross the road to his lodgings, and so was compelled to stand on the pavement as his sovereign passed. George saw him, and exclaimed, in tones of surprise, "D——n it!

there's old Brummell!" The latter was greatly upset by the meeting, and returned to his apartments much agitated. A little later, he went to Dessein's and signed his name in the King's visitors'-book, and in the evening sent his valet to make the punch, from a recipe that George loved.

The next morning all the *suite*, with the single exception of Bloomfield,[1] called on the Beau; and some tried to persuade him to ask for an audience. This, however, he refused to do; he had seen the King, he had further formally notified his presence: if George would receive him, it was for his Majesty to indicate his wish. Brummell knew enough of the King's character not to expose himself to a rebuff. The King made no sign, and departed without seeing the man with whom he had for many years been on the most intimate terms. Brummell had gone under: let him remain beyond the pale of the royal smile with Hanger and Lade and the rest. Afterwards, it was said, George *boasted* that he had stayed at Calais without receiving Brummell! It was a boast worthy of this monarch and thoroughly in keeping with his character. "The King had won," the present

[1] Benjamin, afterwards first Baron, Bloomfield (1768–1846), a confidential adviser of George IV.

writer has said elsewhere. "He had seen his old friend, his old foe—which you will—his old comrade, beaten, bankrupt, humbled, and he had passed him by. The King had won, yet perhaps for once it was better to be the vanquished than to win at such a price. Perhaps in the last years of his life George thought once more of Brummell, as himself, half-blind, half-mad, utterly friendless, he went down to the grave unwept and unhonoured."

CHAPTER XVI

THE LAST YEARS OF GEORGE BRUMMELL
(1830—1840)

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IT had been suggested to two English ministers that they should do something for the exile, but neither would take any step lest the King should be offended, which was probably the reason why Canning refused the Duke of York's request to the same effect. At last Wellington, who was less tender in his regard for his Majesty's feelings, went to Windsor, and subsequently related the gist of the interview: the King had made objections, abusing Brummell—said he was a damned fellow and had behaved very ill to him (the old story—*moi, moi, moi*); but after having let him run his tether, he had at last extracted his consent. No result followed, however, until Charles Greville saw Brummell after the accession of William IV. "I had a long conversation with Brummell about his consulship, and was moved by his account of his own distresses to write to the Duke of

Wellington and ask him to do what he could for him," the memoirist noted. "I found him in his old lodging, dressing—some pretty pieces of old furniture in the room, an entire toilet of silver, and a large green macaw perched on the back of a tattered silk chair with faded gilding; full of gaiety, impudence, and misery."

"CALAIS, *September* 11, 1829.

"MY DEAR WILSON,[1]

"Most happy shall I be to shake you once more by the hand, and I am delighted to hear that the contemptible prohibition against your *passe-partout* in these dominions is at an end.

"I am still vegetating, for I will not call it living, with the fat weeds that sleep within the stagnant ditches that surround this place. I am, indeed, comparatively as fat, but that can be accounted for by the windy nature of my nourishment, hope long deferred yet still green and promising in the fancy. My dependence is placed upon the good offices of one great man who, as he has always extended every kindness towards me, will not neglect any favourable opportunity to be of service to me.

"Ever truly yours,

"GEORGE BRUMMELL.

"I do not take in any French *journaux*. I read them *gratis* where I am lodged."[2]

[1] Sir Robert Thomas Wilson (1777–1849), general, and governor of Gibraltar.

[2] This letter, which is now printed for the first time, is in the Manuscript Department of the British Museum Library.

Brummell, it will be seen, had not abandoned hope, and now a new King was on the throne his friends again took up the matter in all earnestness, with the result that, as Jesse put it, "he was entrusted with the extensive commercial interests of the British nation, in the capital of Lower Normandy. The remainder of his days were to be devoted to the inspection of persons with *fronts écrasés*, *cheveux roux*, *sourcils idem*, *yeux grisâtres*, *nez retroussés*, and *visages bourgeonnés ;* and his *lecture* to the verification of passports, bills of lading, invoices, and mercantile papers of all kinds." In other words, Brummell was on September 10, 1830, appointed His Britannic Majesty's Consul at Caen, with a salary of four hundred a year.

This appointment brought in its train much trouble, for Brummell was heavily in debt, and his patient creditors, who raised no protest while he remained in their midst, would not allow him to depart without payment. The thousand pounds he had brought with him from England had long since gone, in company with the sums his friends had from time to time subscribed, for he had been unable to accommodate himself to his changed circumstances, and could never accustom himself to the penny-wise economies of life that with

his means were so necessary. He decorated his apartments on a lavish scale, and did not hesitate to lay down a black-and-white marble pavement in the hall of his private entrance; he had, as Jesse says, quite an old dowager's passion for buhl furniture, and, he might have added, for Sèvres china. It is recorded that the courier who went to Paris to execute the Beau's commissions for these and other valuable articles made a profit of thirty thousand francs during the ten or twelve years he was thus employed; and that his employer would sometimes disburse half this sum within a twelvemonth. Indeed, the account of Brummell's sitting-room, written by an eye-witness, suggests the apartment of a wealthy man. "On one side of his drawing-room stood a large cabinet, with brass-wire doors; these were kept locked with the most jealous care, for they protected, from the familiar and dangerous inspection of his visitors, a service of extremely beautiful Sèvres china. The designs were most exquisite, and on each plate was represented, in colours chaster than the original, all the celebrated beauties that held such powerful sway over the courts of Louis the Fourteenth and Louis the Fifteenth; and as they were not few in number, the reader may imagine that his inanimate but

elegant harem completely filled his buhl seraglio. These portraits were so charmingly done that the Beau, in the true spirit of a sultan, used to inform his visitors, that it was almost 'profanation to look at these fair frail ones.' The walls of this room were covered with pictures and prints—a few of the former being from the pencil of a young artist of the town, who was patronised by the Beau by way of encouragement. Some favourite books, in handsome suits of morocco or silk, reposed on the card-tables; and, on the circular one in the centre of the apartment, lay a little crowd of valuable snuff-boxes, miniatures, card-cases, paper-weights, knifes, and portfolios, in every variety of gold, enamel, mother-of-pearl, ivory, tortoiseshell, embossed leather, or embroidered satin."[1]

The acquisition of these expensive luxuries left Brummell without means to pay for necessaries; but for years he contrived to stave off the demands of those to whom he owed money, and his method of doing so was characteristic of the man. "Whenever any one of my creditors calls upon me, the moment he enters the room I commence an amusing conversation, and tell him anecdotes that I think will interest him," he told

[1] Jesse: *Life of Brummell.*

Major Chambre, to whom he sent one day in 1829 when in difficulties. "This has hitherto succeeded very well, for I divert their attention from the subject that brings them to me. We shake hands and part on good terms; but my stock-in-trade is exhausted, and I am now completely used up. I have nothing left to tell them, and what to do I don't know." Major Chambre gave the only practical advice: "Sell your costly furniture and your valuable snuff-boxes"; but the Beau could not bring himself to do this until, on his appointment as Consul at Caen, he was compelled to do so or to refuse the post. But even the proceeds of the sale of his effects did not suffice to clear him from debt; and he had to borrow from a Calais money-lender the sum of twelve thousand francs on terms so exorbitant that, after providing for repayment, he was left with only eighty pounds a year out of his salary.

He left Calais with some feelings of regret, for he had not been altogether unhappy during his stay. "I would have wished you good-bye," he wrote afterwards in apology to Madame de St. Ursains, "but I was in tears." His landlord parted with him with regret. "*Mais, monsieur, le pauvre homme était si amusant, si amusant,*

qu'on ne pourrait rien lui refuser," he said some years later to Captain Jesse. "Sir, I would have kept him for nothing if he would have stayed: ah! he certainly was a very droll fellow." Jesse also relates the more touching tribute of a little tobacconist, who said to him: "Go and see Dessein's before you condemn our hotels; your King slept there once, and, do you know, a friend of his lived here many years—we used to call him *le roi de Calais*." Then her eyes filled with tears. "*Ah! c'était un bien brave homme, très élégant, et avec beaucoup de moyens*—he always paid his bills, sir, and was very good to the poor, and every one was very sorry when he left. I wonder *le roi* George did not take bettare care of his frandes." There must have been some good in a man who could elicit testimonies like this!

Brummell left Calais, *en route* for Paris, in company with a King's Messenger, one of the most splendid specimens of the genus snob that has ever been heard of. The latter, proud of having travelled with so great a personage, on his return told Marshall, the British Consul at Calais, that he had found the Beau a most entertaining companion. "Very pleasant indeed, very pleasant."

"Yes," said Marshall, anxious to hear how

Brummell felt on leaving a place where he had been domiciled for fourteen years; "but what did he say?"

"Say, sir, why nothing," replied the other; "he slept the whole way."

"Slept the whole way!" cried the Consul in astonishment. "Do you call that being pleasant? Perhaps he snored?"

The King's Messenger admitted that Brummell had snored! but he added gravely, "Yet I can assure you, sir, Mr. Brummell snored very much like a gentleman."

At Paris Brummell spent a pleasant week, meeting Lord Stuart de Rothesay, the English Ambassador, with whom he dined to meet Talleyrand, and other old friends, though the happy hours spent in congenial society, he said subsequently, "have spoilt me for a year to come." He devoted many hours to the curiosity shops, for not even the fact that his financial troubles had only been just overcome—or, to be more accurate, postponed—could impose a check on his expenditure, and he spent a hundred pounds on buhl furniture to replace that which he had just sold!

To Caen he travelled post with four horses, and on arriving on October 10, 1830, at his destination, alighted at the best hotel, and in the register

signed himself for the first time: "George Bryan Brummell, *consul de sa majesté britannique.*"

"I arrived at my destination," he told his friend Marshall, "and underwent all the horrors, and all the more horrible cheating, of one of the worst hotels, I am confident, in Europe, though they tell me it is the best here. During seven days I gnawed bones upon unwashed dowlas in this charnel-house; what a difference after Stuart, Talleyrand, Madame de Bagration, and Montrond! and during seven nights I thought it necessary to scratch myself without sleeping, though I must, in justice, say, I believe there was no occasion for such penance."

"Good fortune at length led my steps to an admirable lodging, half a house, the property of a most cleanly, devout old lady (the cousin of Guernon de Ranville, one of the condemned ministers), excellently furnished, with a delightful garden, two Angola cats, and a parrot that I have already thrown into apoplectic fits with sugar," he wrote to the same correspondent on October 25; and to him he gave a description of his reception at Caen. "From the letters which I brought with me from Paris to the Préfet [Target], the General, and three or four other big-wigs, given

to me by no less personages than Molé and Sebastiani, you must know that, without a sixpence in my pocket, I am become a great man here. They dine me and *fête* me most liberally; and I have already been elected a member of their *Société* or club, a sort of Brooks's, but in a much more magnificent house, *without ballot*, an honour not before accorded to any Englishman. All the newspapers and latest periodical publications are there taken in profusion, and as much franc whist, *écarté*, and billiards as you please, till eleven at night. All well-educated, well-mannered and well-conditioned people; no industrious master of arts, like ——; no superannuated, imbecile clod-hoppers, like ——. To-morrow I dine at a grand to-do given by the Préfet and Monsieur de la Pommeraye, the deputy; and I am preparing a *neat little extempore*, which I shall let off upon success to the commerce of the two countries being toasted.

"The English residents here are very respectable persons; they keep large and hospitable mansions, and derive the best advantage that families can do—the best possible education in every branch, both male and female, that the whole of France can produce. The two leading *Amphitryons de nos compatriotes* established in

Caen are Messrs. Villiers and Burton, two very good men of independent fortune, with numerous families. Their houses—and, without exaggeration, they are like Devonshire House, or the Embassy at Paris—are generally open at half-past five to a well-provided dinner, and, Heaven knows, I have as yet profited most abundantly by their kindness, and always *portes ouvertes* in the evening. The French of the best class mingle much in this society, and there is always a fiddle for the amusement of the young ladies.

"I am doing all I can to make all parties satisfied with me. I condole with the outs, and agree with the ins: as to my own nation, I have called upon all who are worthy of such a compliment. I shake hands and gossip with the fathers and mothers, and pat all their dirty-nosed children upon the head, and tell them that they are beautiful. What can I do more with my scanty means?"

Though Brummell was able to present so roseate a view of Caen shortly after his arrival, it was not long before troubles began to crowd upon him. His valet, to whom he was in debt to the extent of over six thousand francs, worried him for payment, and when he had obtained his due, left him after having been thirteen years in

his service, and repaired to Boulogne, where he established the *Café Sélègue* in the Grande Rue. The want of money pressed so heavily upon Brummell at this time that he was willing, nay, eager, even to accept clothing. "My old friend, 'King' Allen, promised, at least it was so represented to me, to send some habiliments for my body, denuded like a new-born infant," he wrote to his good angel, Lord Alvanley; adding sadly, "And what a *beau* I once was!"

On eighty pounds a year he could not exist even with the greatest economy. He was, indeed, as careful as he could be to keep down his expenses, but he could not resist his longing for clean linen, and his yearly washing bill amounted to eight hundred francs. "Send me seventy-five francs to pay my washer-woman; I cannot get a shirt from her, and she is really starving on my account. I have not actually money to pay my physician, or for my letters to and from England," he wrote to Armstrong, a factor at Caen, to whom Alvanley had given instructions: "I beg you will protect and assist poor Brummell, and rely on my making it good to you."

"I foresee that little or nothing is to be made of my department; *n'importe*, I shall try something in the spring to better it," Brummell

had written to Marshall on October 25, 1830; but, as a matter of fact, as time passed he came to the conclusion that the post was unnecessary, and that what work there was could be done—as, indeed, during his tenure of the office most of it was done—by a sub-consul. Captain Jesse states it was believed that he was written to officially by the Government to inquire whether there was, or was not, any necessity for a consulate at Caen, and that he very honestly informed the Foreign Office of his opinion. On the other hand, the view is generally held that he volunteered the information to Lord Palmerston, in the hope of being appointed to a more lucrative position. All that is certain, however, is that the following passage occurred in his letter:

"Your Lordship must be aware that by informing the Government of the inutility of a Consul at Caen, I am actuated by purely disinterested motives. Your Lordship will also bear in mind that my bread depends upon the trifling emoluments which I receive as Consul at Caen. Should your Lordship, therefore, on my suggestion, think fit to abolish the office, I trust some means of subsistence will be provided for me by the Government." On receipt of Brummell's statement Lord Palmerston reluctantly abolished

the sinecure in 1832. "What can I do?" he said in answer to some friends of Brummell's, who begged him not to displace the present holder. "In the present time of popular cry for retrenchment and reform, I can only act upon his recommendation and reduce the place." That was doubtless the only course open; but what the minister might have done, and did not do, was to transfer Brummell to another place.

How Brummell contrived to live during the next few years is a mystery, and all that is known of his history during this period is that in 1834 he had a stroke of paralysis. In May of the following year, however, occurred the most distressing incident in his career: the Calais moneylender, thinking, probably, that the only way to obtain payment of his loan was to excite the compassion of the debtor's friends, had Brummell sent to prison.

The unhappy man wrote pathetically to a lady on the day following his incarceration: "The state of utter abstraction in which I have been during the last thirty hours yet clouds my every sense. I have just received your note—may Heaven bless you all for your good devotedness in remembering me at such a moment! I have been the victim of a villain, who has closed upon me, without giving

me the remotest intimation of his designs. I am perfectly innocent of anything bearing the least dishonourable construction in this *malheureuse affaire*: and if I was not deserving of the interest you express as well as —— towards me, I would not demand it."

"Imagine a position more wretched than mine," he cried to a friend who came to him on hearing of this misfortune; "they have put me with all the *common* people. I am surrounded by the greatest villains, and have nothing but prison fare." In those days at Caen no distinction was made at the prison between criminals and debtors; but, after a few days, Brummell's friends, though unable, owing to the lack of space, to secure for him a separate room, obtained for him permission to share the apartment of M. Godefroi, a political offender.

The useful Armstrong at once went to England to put the Beau's sad state before his friends, and the latter, though they had been so sorely tried, again came to the rescue. King William gave one hundred pounds from his private purse, Lord Palmerston twice that sum, as a belated gift from the public purse to a dismissed official of the Foreign Office; while Lord Alvanley and the Duke of Bedford, besides giving money them-

selves, set on foot a subscription. The Duke of Devonshire, Lord Sefton, General Upton, General Grosvenor, Colonel Dawson Damer, Charles Greville, and Hall Standish contributed a "pony" each, and many others gave lesser sums. "A thousand thanks for poor Mr. Brummell," wrote Harriet, Lady Granville, who interested herself in the matter, to the Duke of Devonshire. "There never was such an act of charity. I am in good heart about the subscription." A sufficient sum was raised to pay off the creditors; while, for the Beau's future maintenance, the Duke of Beaufort, Lord Sefton, and Lord Alvanley combined to guarantee him an income of a hundred and twenty pounds a year.

Brummell was released on July 21, and he celebrated the occasion by appearing at a *soirée*, where he was the recipient of many hearty congratulations. "*Messieurs*," he said, with a touch of humour that was akin to sadness, "*je suis bien obligé pour votre bonté, et charmé de me trouver encore une fois parmi vous; je puis vous assurer que c'est aujourd'hui le plus heureux jour de ma vie, car je suis sorti de prison—et j'ai mangé du saumon.*"[1]

Unfortunately the two months in prison had

[1] Jesse: *Life of Brummell.*

affected him more deeply than he or others suspected; and, in addition, the contrast between his present pitiable condition and the splendour of his early days preyed upon his mind. He became light-headed, and his memory began to give way. Even now he could not reconcile himself to his limited income, and, though he had sacrificed his white ties and wore in their stead the more economical black ones, he still ordered from Paris "vernis de Guiton" for his boots at five francs a bottle, and he had to pawn his few remaining possessions for the necessities of life. The day came when he had only one pair of trousers and when his boots were in holes; then, poor soul! and then only, his spirit gave way.

Moore was at Caen in July 1837, and noted that "the poor Beau's head was gone, and his whole looks so changed that I should never have recognised him. Got wandering in his conversation more than once during dinner";[1] while in September of the following year, Alvanley wrote to Raikes: "Poor Brummell is become imbecile; he saw ——, and knew him, but in a few minutes afterwards he forgot him, and said that his friends had been kind to him, with the exception of ——,

[1] Moore: *Journals.*

who was a shabby fellow, and had done nothing, after having promised everything. He is grown slovenly and dirty; is, however, otherwise well, and lives on what we subscribe for him." [1]

Henceforth Brummell's chief pleasures in life were to eat meals with more regard to the quantity than the quality of the viands, and to sit over a great fire at all seasons; for even in the hot weather of July and August he could not get warm enough. This last habit was maliciously perverted by Lytton into a deliberate attempt on the part of the Beau to inconvenience his guests.

"It was a very small room in which I found Russelton. He was stretched in an easy chair before the fireplace, gazing complacently at his feet, and apparently occupied in anything but listening to Sir Willoughby Townshend, who was talking with great vehemence about politics and the corn-laws. Notwithstanding the heat of the weather, there was a small fire on the hearth, which, aided by the earnestness of his efforts to convince his host, put poor Sir Willoughby into a most intense perspiration. Russelton, however,

[1] Raikes: *Journal.*

In October Alvanley told Raikes that "Poor Brummell is still at Caen, but his intellect is impaired, and he hardly recognises any one. —*Quelle fin!*"

seemed enviably cool, and hung over the burning wood like a cucumber on a hotbed. Sir Willoughby came to a full stop by the window, and, gasping for breath, attempted to throw it open.

"'What are you doing? for Heaven's sake, what are you doing?' cried Russelton, starting up. 'Do you mean to kill me?'

"'Kill you?' said Sir Willoughby, quite aghast.

"'Yes, kill me! Is it not quite cold enough in this d——d seafaring place, without making my own retreat, humble as it is, a theatre for thorough draughts? Have I not had the rheumatism in my left shoulder, and the ague in my little finger, these last six months? and must you now terminate my miserable existence at one blow, by opening that abominable lattice? Do you think, because your great frame, fresh from the Yorkshire wolds, and compacted of such materials that one would think, in eating your beaves, you had digested their hides into skin—do you think, because your limbs might be cut up into planks for a seventy-eight, and warranted waterproof without pitch, because of the density of their pores—do you think, because you are as impervious as an araphorostic shoe, that I, John Russelton, am equally impenetrable, and that you

are to let easterly winds play about my room like children, begetting rheums and asthmas and all manner of catarrhs? I do beg, Sir Willoughby Townshend, that you will suffer me to die a more natural and civilised death'; and, so saying, Russelton sank back in his chair, apparently in the last stage of exhaustion." [1]

During the last years of his life, when his mind had nearly gone, it was Brummell's custom in the evenings to hold imaginary receptions of those with whom he had once been on intimate terms. "On these *gala* evenings," says Jesse, "he desired his attendant to arrange his apartment, set out a whist-table, and light the *bougies* (he only burnt tallow at the time), and at eight o'clock this man, to whom he had already given his instructions, opened wide the door of his sitting-room, and announced, 'The Duchess of Devonshire.' At the sound of her Grace's well-remembered name, the Beau, instantly rising from his chair, would advance towards the door, and greet the cold air from the staircase, as if it had been the beautiful Georgiana herself. If the dust of that fair creature could have stood reanimate in all her loveliness before him, she would not have thought his bow less graceful

[1] *Pelham.*

than it had been thirty-five years before; for, despite poor Brummell's mean habiliments and uncleanly person, the supposed visitor was received with all his former courtly ease of manner, and the earnestness that the pleasure of such an honour might be supposed to excite. 'Ah! my dear Duchess,' faltered the Beau, 'how rejoiced I am to see you! so very amiable of you at this short notice! Pray bury yourself in this armchair; do you know, it was a gift to me from the Duchess of York, who was a very kind friend of mine; but, poor thing, you know, she is now no more.' Here the eyes of the old man would fill with the tears of idiotcy, and, sinking into the fauteuil himself, he would sit for some time looking vacantly at the fire, until Lord Alvanley, Worcester, or any other old friend he chose to name was announced, when he again rose to receive him, and went through a similar performance. At ten, his attendant announced the carriages—and this farce was at an end."

But it was not only the old Beau's mind, but also his strength that gave way; and at last it seemed that he must be confined, since it taxed the powers of any one person to attend to him. "I have deferred writing for some time, hoping to be able to inform you that I had succeeded in

getting Mr. Brummell into one of the public institutions, but I am sorry to say I have failed," Armstrong wrote to one of Brummell's friends on November 28, 1838. "I have also tried to get him into a private house; but no one will undertake the charge of him in his present state; in fact, it would be totally impossible for me to describe the dreadful situation he is in. For the last two months I have been obliged to pay a person to be with him night and day, and still we cannot keep him *clean*; he now lies upon a straw mattress, which is changed every day. They will not keep him at the hotel, and what to do I know not: I should think that some of his old friends in England would be able to get him into some hospital, where he could be taken care of for the rest of his days. I beg and entreat of you to get something done for him, for it is quite out of the question that he can remain where he is. The clergyman and physician here can bear testimony to the melancholy state of idiotcy he is in." [1]

Admittance was eventually obtained for him into the asylum of the Bon Sauveur, where he was lodged in the room once occupied by de Bourrienne. There he was carefully tended, as

[1] Jesse: *Life of Brummell.*

Lord Sefton, who called to see him, assured himself; but he was sinking fast, and it was evident that his days were numbered. On March 29, 1840, he recovered his senses for a few hours, and repeated a prayer said by the nun in attendance; then he sank back and passed away.

"This morning saw in the paper the death of poor Brummell," Raikes noted in his Journal on April 7, 1840. "He has been for some time past in wretched circumstances, and in a state of complete imbecility. It is, therefore, a happy release for him; but when I call to mind his gay career and success in London society, a wretched end like this suggests an awful lesson."

Before bidding *adieu* to Brummell, let those who have read the story of his life, after endeavouring to the best of their ability, ask dispassionately what is this "awful lesson" which Tom Raikes suggests should be drawn from the Beau's wretched end. Can it be that a man should not become mad? for certainly that, and naught else, was the primary cause of the misery of Brummell's last days. Or is the moral to be deduced, that the man who gambles for stakes beyond his means should not lose? This last, perhaps, is the most

obvious lesson of Brummell's life: for, surely, in an age when everybody played with cards or dice, nobody would be so impudent as to ask us to learn from the career of any one gamester that gambling carried to excess is a vice! We know that Fox lost more than one fortune at play, and that Alvanley disposed of the greater part of his possessions in the same way: it would, indeed, be cruel to make Brummell, rather than another, point the moral.

Still, the world will have its scapegoat, as Byron found; and so, as a sop to those writers who have not hesitated to improve the occasion with high-falutin' sentiment, let it, without more ado, be conceded that gambling is pernicious, and that the earthenware vessels that go down-stream with the iron pots will certainly be chipped, and probably be smashed, during the voyage.

In this utilitarian, commercially minded twentieth century, when the most damning thing which can be said of a man is that he cannot manage his affairs, a Brummell can expect but scant mercy. To have a disregard for money is regarded as insane; to have at once a disregard for money and a nature that cannot balance expenditure with income is, in the eyes of the world, regarded as worse than any known vice, with the

possible exception of murder; since it is a cardinal point of English law, as administered by magistrates, that offences against property are far more reprehensible than offences against the person. You may hit your wife on the head with a poker, and be a free man again before the dastardly scoundrel who was sentenced on the same day for stealing a loaf of bread from a baker's cart or a joint of beef from a butcher's shop for his starving children.

Yet surely it may be that there is something higher than money and lower than extravagance, and that the bankrupt is not necessarily the most vicious person in the universe—though, until the millennium comes, it can scarcely be expected that a world inhabited chiefly by tradesmen or people with tradesmen's souls will extend sympathy to him who, seeing things on a large scale, troubles little or nothing about conforming to the limits of an income. The penny-wise economies come easily to those who think in pennies, but are impossible, because often enough unseen, to the irresponsible man whose thoughts soar above copper.

Brummell was as irresponsible as any man could be, but he was certainly not vicious, although those who regarded these words as synonymous

naturally thought that he was thoroughly abandoned. "Here we must stop and mark the reverse sides of the medal," Raikes delivered himself in a funeral oration on hearing the news of his friend's death. "Never did any influence create such wide and real mischief in society. Governed by no principle himself, all his efforts and example tended to stifle it in others. Prodigality was his creed, gambling was his lure, and a reckless indifference to public opinion the very groundwork of his system. The cry of indignation that was raised at his departure, when he left so many friends who had become his securities to pay the means of his past extravagance, some of them at the risk of their own ruin, was a low and feeble whisper when compared to the groans and sighs of entire families who have since had to deplore those vices and misfortunes which first originated in his seduction. What a long list of ruin, desolation, and suicide could I now trace to this very source!"[1]

Brummell's advocates cannot defend the shifts to which he, like Fox, was reduced, when he had beggared himself at the gaming-table; but the other items of the indictment may not be allowed to pass without comment. Surely it is unfair to

[1] *Portion of a Journal.*

charge him with the "long list of ruin, desolation, and suicide" that resulted from the indulgences of other men, for it was not he who made gambling fashionable, nor was there ever even hinted a suspicion that he preyed upon the unwary: he played, not with boys in the privacy of his own house, but with men at the great clubs where cards had already been the fashion long before he was born; and if he won—as, indeed, it is known he did win—some thousands from a brewer on one occasion, and at another time a greater sum from a banker, the losers were at least as culpable as their successful antagonist. Indeed, as it has already been said, it is ridiculous to blame Brummell because others gambled in an age when everybody played; and it would be more to the point to regret that Brummell himself fell a victim to the fascinations of games of hazard.

To accuse Brummell of a "reckless indifference to public opinion" is to pay him a compliment that is the portion of all great men; and that Raikes should say this is amusing, since that worthy was one of the Beau's most slavish imitators. But how did Brummell show this indifference? He was certainly careless of the world's censure, which doubtless annoyed the

world, but this can scarcely be held a sin against society. He was not respectful to dignitaries as such, which may have been regarded as a further offence; but this was scarcely outraging propriety. He may have been convivial, but he was not a drunkard; and, though he was run after by women of all classes, he was not a profligate, and there has been no act of seduction recorded against him—though, perhaps, these things were not placed to his credit in a hard-drinking, immoral age.

To say that he had no principle with which to guide his conduct is as unintelligent as it is libellous, for any clear-sighted student of his career must see that every action of his life was directed by the passion for perfection. No man ever achieves his ideals, but Brummell, it must be confessed, ran his close. At an early age he determined to be famous, and with unerring instinct he started on the right path. "Other heroes have wasted their powers in uncertain experiment; they have fumbled uselessly in the search after their true talent," Mr. Whibley has written. "But George Brummell came into his inheritance while still a boy; he never for a moment was anything but a dandy. In truth he has made the title his own, and other men claim it because they believe

themselves illuminated by a spark of Brummell's genius. He might have been a soldier or a politician; he might, perchance, have been a wit; but war was as distasteful to him as affairs, and with that perfect consistency which marks only the greatest of men, he devoted himself to the unique cultivation of himself. The sole end and aim of his career was to present George Brummell to the world as the type of grandeur and superiority." [1]

How well he succeeded in his ambitious resolve all the world knows, and there is no need to dwell further upon how he deposed "The First Gentleman of Europe," and seated himself, while still in the early twenties, in the seat of honour as the first dandy of the world, being, as Lytton put it, "the contemporary and rival of Napoleon —the autocrat of the great world of fashion and cravats—the mighty genius before whom aristocracy had been humbled and *ton* abased—at whose nod the haughtiest *noblesse* of Europe had quailed—who had introduced, by a single example, starch into neckcloths, and had fed the pampered appetite of his boot-tops on champagne—whose coat and whose friend were cut with an equal grace, and whose name was connected with every

[1] *The Pageantry of Life.*

triumph that the world's great virtue of audacity could achieve."[1]

Of course it may be asked about Brummell, as it was about the fictitious Beau Austin, "What has he done—with half a century of good health, what has he done that is either memorable or worthy? Diced and danced and set fashions, vanquished in a drawing-room, . . . what else?" But the question is, not what Brummell has done, —though it might be said in reply, that he took folly and made a fine art of it—but what he was? Let the answer come from his first and his best biographer.

"*Ôtez le Dandy, que reste-t-il de Brummell? Il n'était propre à être rien de plus, mais aussi rien de moins que le plus grand Dandy de son temps et de tous les temps. Il le fut exactement, purement; on dirait presque naïvement, si l'on osait. Dans le pêle-mêle social qu'on appelle une société par politesse, presque toujours la destinée est plus grande que les facultés, ou les facultés supérieures à la destinée. Mais pour lui, chose rare, il y eut accord entre la nature et le destin, entre le génie et la fortune. Plus spirituel ou plus passionné, c'était Sheridan; plus grand poète (car il fut poète), c'était Lord Byron; plus grand*

[1] *Pelham.*

seigneur, c'était Lord Yarmouth ou Byron encore; Yarmouth, Byron, Sheridan, et tant d'autres de cette époque, fameux dans tous les genres de gloire, qui furent Dandys, mais quelque chose de plus. Brummell n'eut point de quelque chose qui était, chez les uns, de la passion ou du génie, chez les autres une haute naissance, une immense fortune. Il gagna à cette indigence; car, réduit à la seule force de ce qui le distingua, il s'éleva au rang d'une chose : il fut le Dandyisme même."[1]

George Bryan Brummell was, indeed, the personification of dandyism.

[1] Barbey D'Aurevilly : *Du Dandyisme et de Georges Brummell*, p. 14.

PART III

THE NEW MEN

CHAPTER XVII

SOME MINOR *BEAUX*—I

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SOME MINOR *BEAUX*—I

Henry Cope—Lord Worcester—Sir George Warrender—James Baillie—"Billy" Boates—James Bradshaw—Edward Montagu—John Mills—"Rufus" Lloyd—"Dick" Fitzgibbon—"Jack" Talbot.

WITH the flight of Brummell in 1816 closes one of the most important chapters, indeed, it may assuredly be said, the most important chapter in the history of dandyism in this country, even when it is remembered that another epoch in fashion opened fifteen years later, when Count D'Orsay made his entrance into London drawing-rooms. That great man, Brummell, was so incontestably the superior of all other dandies of the time, that all bowed before him, and even the most prominent men in society were but the majors, captains, and subalterns in the regiment which he commanded with despotic power. The fashionables of the earlier era had now disappeared from the scene: "Jockey of Norfolk" was dead; Sir Lumley Skeffington and Sir John Lade were, or

had been, in the debtors' prison; George Hanger, now Lord Coleraine, lived in comparative seclusion, and rarely or never revisited his old haunts; and Henry, Lord Barrymore, a ruined man, had fled to the Continent.

At this time, and for many years to come, the leadership of fashion was, as it were, in commission, for Charles, Lord Petersham, had a faithful band of followers, which included all the exquisites who had not enlisted under the banner of the "four chiefs," as Byron styled Brummell, Sir Henry Mildmay, Henry Pierrepoint,[1] and Lord Alvanley. The last three carried on the Brummellian traditions, and bravely upheld the standard of fashion against all comers; but now arose a crowd of minor *beaux*, curtly and cruelly dismissed by Byron in a few lines:

> "The dynasty of Dandies, now
> Perchance succeeded by some other class
> Of imitated imitators:—how
> Irreparably soon decline, alas!
> The demagogues of fashion: all below
> Is frail."

1 Of Sir Henry Mildmay and Henry Pierrepoint, little more than their names have come down to the present generation. Of the latter, Grantley Berkeley says he was an amiable, gentlemanlike man; and of the former Lord William Pitt Lennox remarks, "a high-bred gentleman, full of information, with only a slight tinge of puppyism."

If of some of this last-mentioned class of dandies it may be said, as Lady Jocelyn said of the Great Mel, "*Si ce n'est pas le gentilhomme, au moins c'est le gentilhomme manqué*,"[1] the majority might have taken for their motto the advice given by a witty father to a young Frenchman about to be launched upon the town: "*Tu est bête; et tu n'es pas beau; sois insolent, c'est ta seule chance!*" The English exquisites of this later Georgian era took this chance, and were undeservedly rewarded for their enterprise with complete success. "How unspeakably odious—with a few brilliant exceptions, such as Alvanley and others—were these dandies!" Captain Gronow wrote with deep contempt. "They were generally middle-aged, some even elderly men, had large appetites and weak digestions, gambled freely, and had no luck. They hated everybody and abused everybody, and would sit together in White's bay-window, or the pit-boxes at the Opera, weaving tremendous crammers. They swore a good deal, never laughed, had their own particular slang, looked hazy after dinner, and had most of them

There is a further allusion to Mildmay about 1810 in Harriet, Lady Grenville's *Correspondence*: "Sir Henry and his wife go about in attitudes, but they match so well and look so handsome, that one forgives them for it."

[1] Meredith: *Evan Harrington*.

been patronised at one time or another by Brummell and the Prince Regent. . . . They gloried in their shame, and believed in nothing good or noble or elevated. Thank Heaven, that miserable race of used-up dandies has long been extinct! May England never look upon their like again!"[1]

The great *beaux* at least lived splendidly: these men had not even that excuse; the former created fashion, the latter slavishly followed it. These minor dandies lived for pleasure, but they indulged in it meanly. They were not witty, they were not talented, they did not hunt or shoot, their only pleasures were scandal-mongering and the card-table. It has been contended that by these courses they only hurt themselves; but this is not true, for they did an incalculable amount of harm by an example that corrupted many of those with whom they associated. Most of them were wealthy, yet nearly all died beggared; and scores of impoverished English peers and county gentlemen have to thank their dandy forebears for their straitened means and encumbered estates. Of these men little is known—some, indeed, have passed into entire oblivion; and even William, Lord Alvanley, a brilliant and

[1] *Reminiscences.*

caustic wit, has not been thought worthy of a separate niche in the *Dictionary of National Biography:* yet their influence was great, and reacted upon all classes of society.

Most of these *beaux* threw over the simplicity of attire inculcated by Brummell's precept and practice, and they endeavoured to attract attention by the singularity of the colour and the exaggerated cut of their clothes. The worst example of eccentricity in this respect was presented by Henry Cope, who secured the *sobriquet* of "The Green Man of Brighton." This personage was, to quote a contemporary account, "dressed in green pantaloons, green waistcoat, green frock, green cravat; and, though his ears, whiskers, eyebrows, and chin were powdered, his countenance, no doubt from the reflection of his clothes, was also green. He ate nothing but green fruits and vegetables; had his rooms painted green, and furnished with green sofa, green chairs, green table, green bed, and green curtains. His gig, his livery, his portmanteau, his gloves, and his whip, were all green. With a green silk handkerchief in his hand, and a large watch-chain with green seals fastened to the green buttons of his green waistcoat, he paraded every day on the Steyne."[1]

[1] *Annual Register*, October 25, 1806.

His appearance was duly recorded also by some rhymester:

"A spruce little man in a doublet of *green*,
Perambulates daily the streets and the Steyne,
Green striped is his waistcoat, his small-clothes are *green*,
And oft round his neck a *green* 'kerchief is seen.
Green watch-string, *green* seals, and, for certain, I've heard,
(Tho' they're powdered), *green* whiskers, and eke a *green* beard.
Green garters, *green* hose, and, deny it who can,
The brains, too, are *green*, of this little *green* man!" [1]

The last line was cruel; but there was, indeed, little doubt of Mr. Cope's insanity, and no one was greatly surprised when he committed suicide by throwing himself from the cliff at Brighton.

None of Cope's contemporaries went to this extreme, but that, possibly, may have been because they lacked the imagination to strike out a course so distinct. After the Peace of Paris they appeared in the day-time in "Cossack" trousers, very full and loose but strapped down under the boots, a buff-coloured waistcoat, an

[1] Quoted in Ashton: *Florizel's Folly*. See also Cyrus Redding: *Fifty Years' Recollections*, vol. i. p. 40, where it is stated: "People went down from London to get a glance of him as he walked the Steyne."

elaborately embroidered blue surtout, and the inevitable huge white cambric tie; and in the evening in tight-fitting, stone-coloured pantaloons, silk stockings, white waistcoat, and blue tail-coat, with brass buttons and velvet collar, carrying the cocked hat that came into fashion about 1812.

Lord Worcester,[1] a man generally beloved and universally praised, remarkable in his day because, unlike the majority of the *beaux*, he was as courteous to the driver of the Brighton stage-coach as to the members of the royal circle at St. James's, a famous sportsman who figures in the "Badminton Hunt" and in Nimrod's sporting sketches, but no more at home in the saddle than in the ball-room at Almack's, introduced a splash of colour into the evening costume. He had served in the Seventh Hussars in the Peninsula, and, after his return to London, had the gold lace stripped from his light blue military trousers, and startled society by appearing in them instead of the more orthodox garment. "Such a dress," commented Lord William Lennox, "would in modern parlance have appeared 'loud' upon almost any other man, but he blended the other colours so well, that there was nothing inharmonious, and his good figure and noble bearing

[1] Henry Somerset, afterwards seventh Duke of Beaufort (1792–1853).

carried him triumphantly through."[1] Sir George Warrender, whom Sir Joseph Copley *would* call Sir George *Provender*, secure of approval by force of his social reputation, dared to appear at Almack's in a light green coat and black tights, with, of course, the inevitable crush hat.

What one man may do with impunity, another does at the risk of his reputation: while Lord Worcester and Sir George Warrender, greatly daring, departed from the accepted canons governing dress, and were rewarded for their enterprise by success, James Baillie, of the Sixteenth Lancers, striving also to strike out a path for himself, failed most ignominiously. "Never was taste in dress so mercilessly outraged," wrote a contemporary in disgust. "Baillie might be seen in the park on a splendid black horse . . . habited in all the colours of the rainbow, and the mixture, like a box of Ackerman's colours, was thoroughly incongruous. His hat was unlike any other I ever saw; his throat was encircled by an ample scarf of white silk; the colour of his waistcoat was of purple velvet, his trousers of a lemon hue; pink silk stockings, like those worn by acrobats and ballet-dancers, and long-quartered shoes, confined by gold buckles, completed the

[1] *Drafts on my Memory*, vol. i pp. 111–2.

costume."[1] This may well have been the Mr. Bailey, spoken of by Jacob Larwood, who was addicted to bright colours; whose favourite costume was a sky-blue coat, a gaudy cravat, a fancy waistcoat, and nankeen trousers; and who was to be seen cantering up and down the Row on a superb black horse, scenting the air by waving a heavily perfumed handkerchief, in gauze silk stockings, and thin pumps adorned with silver buckles; and in the evening at the Opera, with his hair descending in ringlets, and a waistcoat of pink or sky-blue satin, embroidered with silver in the summer and gold in the winter.[2] Baillie, when at his villa at Tunbridge Wells, employed a local tailor to make him a coat, and a few days after delivery of the garment, the elated tradesman called to inquire if the coat fitted. "Coat! Do you call that a coat?" cried the outraged dandy, in the words of Brummell. "I gave it to my gardener to cut into strips, and nail up the peach trees with it: it was fit for nothing else."

Yet another dandy with *outré* tastes was "Billy" Boates, of the Horse Guards, whose evening attire was a blue coat, brass buttons, black velvet collar,

[1] Lennox: *Celebrities I have Known*, series i. vol. i. pp. 313–4.

[2] *Story of the London Parks*, vol. i. pp. 316–7. Mr. Larwood's Bailey was an athletic youth, whose career fittingly ended in the Bankruptcy Court.

light pantaloons, black silk stockings, shoes, white waistcoat, under-waistcoat faced with light blue silk, white shirt, a large camellia in his button-hole, a gold-headed cane, and a most *recherché* snuff-box.[1]

There were, besides these, Tom Raikes, Long Wellesley, Ball Hughes, Henry Luttrell, "Poodle" Byng, Lord Yarmouth, "Pea-green" Haynes, Lord Dudley, Gronow, and Lord William Pitt Lennox, besides such social favourites as Theodore Hook, Sam Rogers, and Sydney Smith, of all of whom something will presently be said; and also such minor lights as Charles Standish, Sir William Williams Wynn, James Bradshaw, John Mills, "Rufus" Lloyd, Edward Montagu, "Jack" Talbot, "Dick" Fitzgibbon, "Dan" Mackinnon, Lord Allen, "Conversation" Sharp, and "Kangaroo" Cooke. The once-popular "Jemmy" Bradshaw[2] survives only in a letter written by Disraeli in 1844 to his sister: "There is no particular news, except that Bradshaw, the last of the school of Brummell, has read a book—and it is called 'Coningsby'!" This was in its way remarkable, for the exquisites of this period were

[1] Lennox: *Fashion.*

[2] He married the well-known actress, Maria Tree, in 1825, after which event she retired from the stage.

not reading men, and there was no exaggeration in the portrait of the famous Mr. Cassilis, who, regarding the New England party as a diversion which "requires a doosed lot of history and all that sort of thing," thought to take part in it "one must brush up one's Goldsmith!"[1] Almost the only exception was Edward Montagu, "The Black Dandy," a well-informed and much-travelled man.

Racing was more to the mind of the dandies than literature, and, indeed, speaking of them as a body, their abilities were such that it was easier for them to make a book than to read a book. An exception was John Mills, called "The Mosaic Dandy" from his Hebraic cast of feature, who was a man of considerable intelligence, and who, when he was not in the bay-window at White's, was usually to be found on a race-course. In the latter sphere he secured distinction as an amateur jockey at the Stapleton and Lambton Park races, where he rode against Kent, John White, Tom Duncombe, Fred Berkeley, and other well-known horsemen; but he won other laurels of which his contemporaries were ignorant, for, under the pseudonym of "A Man of Fashion," he issued many sporting works, the best known of which is "D'Horsay, or, The

[1] Disraeli: *Sybil.*

Follies of the Day," a satire on the fashionable world as he knew it in his middle age.[1]

"Rufus" Lloyd, the colour of whose hair suggested the nickname "The Red Dandy," was a man of no talent, but, says Lord William Pitt Lennox, presumably in extenuation, "he was very neat in his attire, and acted the part of the 'walking dandy' extremely well"; while "Dick" Fitzgibbon, the same authority states, was "a kind, warm-hearted Irishman, highly gifted, as his countrymen usually are; he was formerly in the army and served at Oporto and Talavera."[2]

Another soldier in the same circle was young "Jack" Talbot of the Guards,[3] whose story might furnish a moral theme for the writers of Sunday-school prize-books. A popular lad, he distinguished himself for bravery while on service in the Peninsula: but he killed himself at the age of seven-and-twenty by over-indulgence in drink. The Duke of Beaufort, who knew of his fondness for liquor, found him at his lodgings in Mount

[1] *D'Horsay, or, The Follies of the Day*, with ten plates by George Standfast, appeared in 1844, when it was suppressed. It was reprinted in 1902, with an introduction by Mr. Joseph Grego. The list of Mills's works includes *The Old English Gentleman, or, The Fields and the Woods* (1841), *The Stage-Coach, or, The Road of Life* (1843), *The Life of a Foxhound* (1848), and several novels.

[2] *Drafts on my Memory.*

[3] He was a son of Lord Malahide.

Street drinking sherry for breakfast, and pointed out to him his folly. "It will be the death of you," his Grace remonstrated. "I get drunk every night," retorted Talbot, "and find myself the better for it next morning." The morning soon came when he did not feel better, and the regimental doctor was called in. Lord Alvanley, who was fond of the lad, asked the medical man how his patient fared. "My lord," was the reply, "he is in a bad way, for I was obliged to make use of the lancet this morning." "You should have tapped him, doctor," said the witty peer, "for I am sure he has more claret than blood in his veins." This was the beginning of the end, and when one morning the Duke of Cambridge, who frequently called in person to inquire after Talbot's health, was told by the servant that his master did not want to see either doctor or parson, but only wished to be left to die in peace, the Duke, much perturbed, at once sent to the house Dr. Keate, who found the young man in his armchair, dead, with a bottle of sherry, half-empty, by his side.

CHAPTER XVIII

SOME MINOR *BEAUX*—II

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Sir George Wombwell—"Dan" Mackinnon—"Kangaroo" Cooke—Lord Westmorland—Lord Sefton—Lord Thanet—Colonel Sebright—"King" Allen—Michael Angelo Taylor—"Prince" Boothby—Lord Hutchinson—"Dick" Armit—Berkeley Craven—Lord de Ros.

"THE *beau* on the wane, riding . . . on that perfection of a horse, is Sir George. There can be but one Sir George, and take him for all in all, it would require a good tailor, a good hatter, boot-maker, and barber, and an ounce of rouge, to have the chance of looking upon his like again,"[1] John Mills wrote of Sir George Wombwell, late of the Tenth Hussars; and twenty years earlier, when this superb buck was in his prime and was independent of "an ounce of rouge," Westmacott had presented him in "The English Spy" in company with Alvanley and Tom Raikes:

[1] *D'Horsay, or, The Follies of the Day*, chapter vi. Wombwell appears in the book under the disguise of Sir George Theophilus.

"There's Gregory W-b-ll, all the go—
The mould of fashion—the court *beau*
Since Brummell fled to France.
His bright, brass harness, and the gray,
The well-known black cabriolet,
Is always latent there."

Sir George Wombwell, who sat for Mr. Cassilis in "Coningsby," like all his brother-exquisites, affected a supercilious air when addressing his inferiors, who were generally impressed by his lofty demeanour. There was at least one exception, however; and it has been related how, having missed his second horse when hunting, Sir George, inquiring of a passer-by, "I say, farmer, damn it! have you seen my fellow?" received, after a long pause during which the countryman looked him up and down, the unexpected answer, delivered in a tone more suggestive of disgust than admiration, "No, upon my soul, I never did!"

"Dan" Mackinnon,[1] another military dandy, obtained notoriety by his marvellous agility and sureness of foot. A great athlete, remarkable for his prowess in running, jumping, and climbing, he used to amuse his friends by creeping over the furniture of a room like a monkey, and set their

[1] Daniel Mackinnon (1791–1836) entered the Guards in 1804, was wounded at Waterloo, and became colonel in 1830. He was the author of the well-known *Origin and History of the Coldstream Guards* (1832).

nerves ajar by taking neck-break scrambles over housetops. "Colonel Mackinnon has only to put on the motley costume, and he would totally eclipse me," said Grimaldi; but that may well have been the famous clown's modesty. However, Mackinnon once gave proof publicly of his cat-like activity, for at Covent Garden, on the occasion of the *début* of Grimaldi's son as clown, he ran round the house on the ledges of the boxes, to the delight and alarm of the audience. He gave a further demonstration of his agility when he was on service during the Peninsula campaign. Desirous to see the inside of a convent, he contrived, by doubling himself up, to force an entrance through one of those small turnstiles through which provisions were passed. This exploit nearly cost him dear, for the Mother Superior made a formal complaint to the Duke of Wellington, who, however, at the end decided to treat the episode as a mere frolic, and contented himself with administering a severe reprimand. Mackinnon was a great practical joker, though fortunately not addicted to the brutal tricks of the Barrymores. His best-known exploit in this direction was causing himself to be presented as the Duke of York to the Spanish authorities at a seaport town, who, of course, treated him with the honours

due to royalty. When the deception became known, another complaint was made to the English commander-in-chief, who summoned the offender before him. What took place at the interview did not transpire, but "Dan" behaved himself wonderfully well during the rest of the campaign.

A third soldier who moved in the same set was Major-General Sir Henry Frederick Cooke,[1] a brother of General Sir George Cooke and of the beautiful Countess of Cardigan. He was universally known as "Kangaroo," either because he let loose a cageful of these animals at Peacock's menagerie, or because, when asked by the Duke of York how he had fared in the Peninsula, replied that he "could get nothing to eat but kangaroo." Entering the Coldstream Guards in 1801, at the age of eighteen, he served in Spain and Portugal, was employed in diplomatic negotiations with the French previous to the Peace of Paris, and from 1814 to 1827 was private *aide-de-camp* to the Duke of York. He was a very popular man in London society, a great favourite with his chief and the Duchess of York, affected a dandified mode of dress, and, presumedly, was extravagant, since a notification appeared in the papers that Colonel Cooke is "bankrupt and pays a shilling in

[1] Born 1783; died at Harefield Park, March 10, 1837.

the pound." A frequent visitor at Oatlands, Lord Erskine met him there, and described him in a humorous sketch of the company assembled at the royal residence in 1812 in Brummell's Album :

" Next to Lewis there sat, would you wish to know who ?
I will tell you—my worthy good friend Kangaroo ;
He who goes by a name by parents not given,
Depend on't is one highly favour'd of Heaven ;
The friend whom we love we mould at our pleasure,
And count on his temper the best of all treasure ;
Since, in spite of the misanthrope's sullen pretence,
Good nature is still the companion of sense.
Thus take the world o'er, you will find very few
Who have more of sound brains than this same
Kangaroo ;
And as for his person, his breeding, and taste,
They speak for themselves."

Lord Westmorland,[1] who held the office of Lord Privy Seal from 1798 for nine-and-twenty years, was a notable figure among the dandies ; but to-day he is best remembered by the little scene when he was presented at the Tuileries to Louis XVIII. His Majesty, desiring to be courteous, and, of course, ignorant that his guest had just divorced his wife, asked after that lady, and inquired if she was in Paris. The peer was very angry, and made no reply ; whereupon the King, thinking perhaps his

[1] John Fane, tenth Earl of Westmorland (1759–1841).

question had not been understood, repeated it. Lord Westmorland was now furious, for all the courtiers were smiling at the awkward situation, and shouted again and again, "*Je ne sais pas !—je ne sais pas !—je ne sais pas !*" until he was stayed by Louis' "*Assez, milord !—assez, milord.*" If the King thought he was not understood, there was some reason for his doubt, since it has been placed on record that Lord Westmorland was the first to give utterance to the since classic phrase: "*Je woudrai si je coudrais, mais je ne cannais pas !*"

Lord Sefton had many claims upon the society of his day. He was gifted with a lively humour; was one of the founders of the original Coaching Club; and, to the great delight of his large circle of friends, secured the services of Louis Eustache Ude, once *chef* to Madame Letitia Buonaparte, and afterwards holding the same office in the household of the Duke of York before he went to Crockford's to take charge of the kitchens; and himself invented a famous *plat* of the soft roe of the mackerel, which was served up in the form of *petits pâtés.*

Lord Sefton is said to have lost two hundred thousand pounds at Crockford's, but his record as a gambler was beaten easily by Lord Thanet,[1]

[1] Sackville Tufton, ninth Earl of Thanet (1767–1825).

From an etching by Richard Dighton (1819).

"KANGKOOK."

(Major-General Sir Henry Frederick Cooke.)

From an etching by Richard Dighton (1818).

LORD SEFTON.

who in his earlier days attracted much attention by creating a riot in court at the trial of Arthur O'Connor,[1] for which proceeding he was duly fined and imprisoned. In later days he was much at Paris, where he frequented the notorious Salon des Étrangers. "Thanet has won forty thousand in one night at Paris," Creevey wrote on March 17, 1823. "He broke the bank at the Salon twice: the question is, will he bring any of this money home with him? I take it for granted *not*." There is little reason to doubt Creevey's conclusion; but the case might have been different if Lord Thanet had been content to play only at the Salon or with his friends. However, he was so passionately fond of gambling that when the gaming-house closed, he would invite those who remained to retire to his rooms and play chicken-hazard and écarté. One night he lost in this way one hundred and twenty thousand pounds, and when informed the next morning, as he pointed out the men who had made up the party, that he had been cheated, "Then," he said calmly, "I consider myself lucky in not having lost twice that sum!"

[1] Arthur O'Connor (1763–1852), an Irish rebel, imprisoned for seditious libel, 1797; went to France in 1803, and afterwards became one of Napoleon's generals of division.

If these noblemen were of a volatile disposition, nothing could have been more British than the demeanour of Colonel Sebright, of the Guards' Club, who would look across from the window of that institution, which was then housed in St. James's Street, and curse the dandies in White's bow-window. "Damn those fellows!" he would cry; "they are upstarts, and fit only for the society of tailors"; and when on one occasion he happened by great ill-fortune to dine at the same table as the "four chiefs," his answer to each of them, when they courteously invited him to take wine, was: "Thank you; I have already had enough of this horrid stuff, and cannot drink any more."

Viscount Allen, better known as "King" Allen, was, as his nickname suggests, as impatient as Colonel Sebright of those men who, despite the fact that they were not of noble or distinguished families, made their way in society. When Mr. Williams, familiarly addressed as "Swell Bill," a partner in Ransom's Bank, was one day at White's objecting to a statue of George III. that was erected just outside his premises, "I should have thought," said Lord Allen, who always rigorously opposed the admission into the club of

[1] Born 1757; died 1834.

bankers and merchants, whom he persistently spoke of as "my tradesmen"—"I should have thought the erection of the statue rather an advantage to you, because, while you are standing idle at your shop-door, it would prevent you seeing the crowds hurrying to the respectable establishment of Messrs. Coutts & Co., close by!" The picture of a great banker standing at his door looking for customers must have made "Swell Bill" smile; but the speaker was much too pompous to see the absurdity of anything he said. "King Allen always reminded me of the hero of a burlesque, a sort of dandy 'Count Pomposo,'" said Lord William Pitt Lennox; "had he remained in the army, some of the nonsense would have been knocked out of him"—for Lord Allen had fought in the Peninsula, and had greatly distinguished himself at Talavera. Indeed, like the rest of the dandies, he was a brave man; and while we may be inclined to belittle them because of their foppishness and their vices, we are constrained, with Sir George Trevelyan, to admit to a certain reverence for our sires:

"... They were a famous race of men.
For every glass of port we drink, they nothing thought of ten,

They lived above the foulest drains, they breathed the closest air,
They had their yearly twinge of gout, but little seemed to care ;
But, though they burned their coal at home, nor fetched their ice from Wenham,
They played the man before Quebec, and stormed the lines at Blenheim."

As Lord Allen was a very poor man, and a great diner-out, some malicious old lady assumed a relation between these things, and said cruelly to him, "My lord, your title must be as good as board-wages to you!" Whether he was extravagant, or whether he really had not means sufficient for living in the circle in which he was born, cannot now be said ; but eventually he had to make some arrangement with his creditors, by which his estates passed from him, whereupon he went abroad, and, after a lengthy stay at Cadiz, went to Gibraltar, where he died in 1843.

The very personification of John Bull was Michael Angelo Taylor, with his florid complexion and white hair, his leather breeches, top-boots, blue coat, white waistcoat, white neckcloth, and broad-brimmed beaver. He was well-knit, but short of stature, and a wag said that, "His father, the sculptor, had fashioned him for a pocket

Hercules." Remembered as one of the managers of the impeachment of Warren Hastings and as the author of the Metropolitan Paving Act of 1817, which still bears his name, he was shunned by politicians of all opinions because of his invariable question, "What news have you?" No one was safe from this inquiry. He put it to Pitt whenever he saw him, and that statesman always replied diplomatically, "I have not yet seen the morning papers." He put it to Lord Westmorland in the dining-room at Boodle's, and that peer, who was a tremendous eater, implored to be permitted to finish his meal—a request granted on the understanding that the diner should join his tormentor afterwards. Later in the evening the Lord Privy Seal fulfilled his pledge, when the following conversation took place:

"Well, my lord, what news?"

"A Welsh leg of mutton."

"What then?—what then?"

"Don't you think a leg of mutton enough for any man?"

"Yes, my lord, but you did not eat it all?"

"Yes, Taylor, I did."

"Well, I think you have placed the leg of mutton in some mysterious place, for I see no trace of it in your lean person."

There is nothing to relate of "Prince" Boothby, save that when he committed suicide he left a statement that he shot himself because he was tired of dressing and undressing. Of Lord Hutchinson,[1] who has a place in the military annals of his times, it need only be mentioned in a history of fashion that he was a great feature at the Pavilion for many years, during which he occupied a house in the grounds adjoining that royal residence; and "Dick" Armit lives only by his reply to the Duke of Gloucester, who, when the lad, shortly after he joined the third regiment of Guards, was presented to him, said, "Oh! I know, son of Armit & Co." (then a well-known business firm), "No, sir—of Armit only!" Berkeley Craven has his niche here as a gambling dandy. He lost a fortune at play, and retired to Calais for a season while his affairs were put in order, being, however, permitted by his creditors to return without fear of arrest for a couple of days to attend a race-meeting—a permission that Lord Alvanley called "The Jew's Passover!" In the end, owing to heavy losses incurred by Lord Jersey's Middleton winning the Derby, Berkeley

[1] General John Hely-Hutchinson (1757–1832), created Baron Hutchinson, 1813; succeeded to the Earldom of Donoughmore on the death of his brother in 1825.

Craven shot himself through the head—not before, it must be said to his credit, he had married his mistress, as this was the only way, owing to his financial embarrassments, he could secure her a competence.

Another member of the same set was Lord de Ros, a well-read man, and an accomplished scholar, who, according to Lord William Pitt Lennox and other writers of memoirs, won all hearts by his amiable disposition. Devoted to whist, he shared with Earl Granville, Hon. George Anson, Lord Henry Bentinck, and perhaps Lord Sefton, the fame of being the finest players of the game in England; and it was for him that Lord Alvanley suggested as a suitable epitaph:

"Here lies
HENRY WILLIAM, Twenty-second Lord de Ros,
In joyful expectation of the Last Trump."

The premier Baron was a member of White's, Boodle's, Brooks's, and Graham's, and played whist at all these clubs, which were one day greatly perturbed by the rumour that he cheated at cards. Every one knows that when Lord Hertford was asked what he would do if he saw a man cheating at cards, he replied, "Why, bet

on him, to be sure"; but those who detected, or thought they detected, the malpractices of Lord de Ros felt themselves compelled reluctantly to announce the fact. Among his accusers were Lord Henry Bentinck and Mr. J. Cumming, and there was no other course for Lord de Ros than to bring an action for libel.

That Lord de Ros was a heavy winner did not tell against him. Stakes were large in those days and bets enormous: it is said that a thousand pounds changed hands over a rubber, which Lord de Ros lost by miscounting a trump! Lord Sefton at Brooks's preferred to play hundred-guinea points besides bets! It has already been mentioned that Charles James Fox used to boast he could win four thousand a year at the whist-table, but he found the strain too great, and preferred to lose fortune after fortune at the less exacting game of hazard; and at the de Ros trial Brooke Greville, called as a witness, make the startling announcement that he had won, chiefly at whist, no less than thirty-five thousand pounds in the fifteen years he had played regularly at Graham's; that he had lost fourteen thousand pounds at Brighton in 1828, a considerable portion of it to Lord de Ros; that he had made up this loss in three or four years; and that, with the exception of this

reverse, he had generally been fortunate at play, which, indeed, he followed as a profession.[1]

It was not, however, his success that brought the accusation upon Lord de Ros, though it may have excited suspicion; for it was declared that he marked the edges of the court-cards with his thumb-nail, and performed a certain trick by which he secured an ace as the turn-up card.[2] It will be seen that the charge brought against him referred only to every fourth hand, that is to say, his deal. "When he took up the two packs of cards, after the operation of cutting the pack by his right-hand adversary, he was always attacked with a hacking cough, or what I may properly denominate, especially from the result it produced, a 'king cough,' because a king or an ace was invariably its effect," said a witness at the trial. "The cough always came on at the most convenient moment to distract the attention of other players, and was evidently indulged in for the purpose of abstracting their attention from

[1] Steinmetz: *The Gaming Table*; etc.

[2] "What is known as the 'pass' in card conjuring is a movement reversing the position of the upper and lower halves of the pack, so that the cards which in the first instance were at the top, pass to the bottom, and *vice versa*. . . . It is also used, less innocently, by card-sharpers, after arranging the pack in a particular manner, to neutralise the effect of the 'cut.' Hence its French title, '*sauter la coupe*.'"—Hoffmann: *Card Tricks*.

the table and from the manœuvre he was about to perform. However, I never saw him 'slip the card,' and I never had cognisance of its execution, but certain it was that the ace or the king, that was at the bottom of the pack prior to the cut, invariably found its way to the same position after the cut, and hence was the turn-up card. With regard to the operation of dealing, his lordship delivered the cards particularly slow, examining every card minutely towards its corners, as if looking for some mark."

The *cause célèbre* was heard before Lord Denman and a special jury, when Sir William Follett, the Attorney-General, lead for the plaintiff, and Thesiger for the defendants. Lord de Ros lost the day, but there were some who believed him innocent, and blamed him only for playing at such a gaming-house as Graham's, instead of such first-rate clubs as White's and Brooks's. "I would leave my card at his house, but I fear he would mark it," said an unkindly wit who, it was said, had never been on Lord de Ros's visiting list. One writer attributes the remark to Charles Kinnaird Sheridan, son of the great generous-hearted genius, who would never have indulged in such a jibe at an unhappy man. "That would depend," retorted Alvanley, taking up the cudgels

in his friend's defence; "that would depend, sir, on whether he considered it a high honour!" Innocent or guilty, from this time until his death on April 28, 1839, Lord de Ros was not seen again in London by his old comrades.[1]

[1] Theodore Hook, whose strong point was not good taste, wrote a little verse about the affair:

"Cease your humming,
The case is 'on';
Defendant's *Cumming*,
Plaintiff's—gone."

Lord de Ros's brother naturally was very angry with Hook for this and other jokes, and he made no secret of his feelings. Hook, knowing this, took his revenge when he met the other, on the river, fishing: "What, my lord, following the family occupation, eh?—*punting*, I see—*punting!*"

CHAPTER XIX

PETERSHAM

From an etching by Richard Dighton.

LORD PETERSHAM.

CHAPTER XIX

PETERSHAM[1]

CHARLES STANHOPE, Lord Petersham, afterwards fourth Earl of Harrington, was the eldest son of the third Earl, who was born at Harrington House, Stable Yard, St. James's, on April 8, 1780. Sent to Eton, he was there at the time of the great rebellion under John Foster, when all the boys threw their books into the Thames, and marched to Salt Hill, where each lad swore he would be damned if ever he returned to school again. When he arrived in London, he went to his father, who, however, would only speak to him at the door of the house, and told him to go back at once to Eton.

[1] Charles Stanhope, Lord Petersham; afterwards fourth Earl of Harrington; 1780–1851.

"Sir," he expostulated, "consider! I shall be damned if I do!"

"And I," retorted the irate father, "will be damned if you don't!"

"Yes, my lord," replied the son politely, but desirous to make Lord Harrington see the injustice of his attitude; "but you will be damned whether I do or no."[1]

At the age of fifteen Lord Petersham entered the army as an ensign in the Coldstream Guards, in which regiment he remained until he attained the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel in 1812, when he retired on half-pay. About that time he was appointed as Lord of the Bedchamber, a position he again held during the reign of George IV., until in 1829 he succeeded to the earldom.

It is not, however, as a military man nor as a courtier he is remembered to-day, but as a *beau* in the days when he was on the town under his courtesy-title of Lord Petersham. He was noted in society for his eccentricities, though Barbey D'Aurevilly was not favourably impressed by him in his pose as dandy. "To the short-sighted he was the model dandy," says that great authority; "but to those who look further than the outward show he was not more a dandy than a well-dressed

[1] *The English Spy.*

woman is an elegant woman."[1] Since, however, few people are gifted with clear vision, he was generally recognised as a gifted leader of fashion; and Lord William Pitt Lennox, quoting Byron's description of George IV.,

"A finished gentleman from top to toe,"

declared that Petersham deserved that character to the full as much as the royal personage upon whom it was bestowed.

Petersham's taste in dress was, perhaps, more distinctive than elegant, for he was prone to excess in fashion. It is impossible to suppress a laugh at the sight of the portrait in which he appears in the full glory of those ugly Cossack trousers that furnished Luttrell with a theme:

"Oft have I traced him through the town,
Mowing whole ranks of beauty down,
Armed at all points, from head to foot,
From rim of hat to tip of boot.
Above so loose, *below* so braced,
In chest exuberant and in waist
Just like an hour-glass, or a wasp,
So tightened, he could scarcely gasp.
Cold was the nymph who did not dote
Upon him in his new-built coat;

[1] *Du Dandysme et de Georges Brummell.*

Whose heart could parry the attacks
Of his voluminous *Cossacks*—
Trousers, so called, from those barbarians
Nursed in the Steppes—the Crim-Tartarians,
Who, when they scour a country, under
Those ample folds conceal their plunder.
How strange their destiny has been!
Promoted, since the year *fifteen*,
In honour of these fierce allies,
To grace our British legs and thighs.
Fashion's a tide which nothing stems;
So the Don mingles with the Thames." [1]

In common with his brother dandies, Lord Petersham attracted the notice of Westmacott, who has also furnished a description of him:

"Lord P—r—m, the delicate dandy,
Laced up in stays to show his waist,
And highly rouged to show his taste,
His whiskers meeting 'neath his chin,
With gooseberry eye and ghastly grin,
With mincing steps, conceited phrase,
Such as insipid P—— displays:
These are the requisites to shine
A dandy, *exquisite*, divine." [2]

[1] *Advice to Julia.*

[2] *The English Spy.* To the passage from this book quoted above the author added a footnote:

"The late Princess Charlotte issued an order, interdicting any one of her household appearing before her with frightful fringes to their leaden heads. In consequence of this cruel command, P—r—m,

Tall and handsome, Petersham dressed like Henri Quatre, whom he was supposed to resemble. He invented an overcoat that was named after him, and wore a "Harrington" hat, specially made for him, the peculiarity of which consisted in its extreme yeoman-shaped crown and square-cut brim turned up with marked eccentricity at the side;[1] while the *tout ensemble* seems occasionally to have been almost irresistibly funny. "We met Lord Petersham in something between a *vis-à-vis* and a sedan-chair," Harriet, Lady Granville noted in 1819. "He put out his head like the flower called 'the devil in a bush,' and for a moment one might have taken him for a large monkey going to some fair."[2]

Petersham's habits were as peculiar as his costume. He never went out before six o'clock in the evening; and when he did go forth it was in a carriage, the body of which, as well as the horses, the harness, and the liveries, even to the glazed top-hats of the coachman and outriders, were brown—his devotion to this colour being a

being one of the lords of the bedchamber, was compelled to curtail his immense whiskers. A very feeling ode appeared upon the occasion, entitled *My Whiskers*, dedicated to the princess; it was never printed, but attributed to Thomas Moore."

[1] Melton: *Hints on Hats.*

[2] *Letters*, 1810–1845.

standing testimony to the affection he once bore to the fair widow, Mary Browne. His family was famous for its tea-drinking, and his father, the third Earl, who drank the beverage in state every afternoon, was known to have welcomed his son, General Lincoln Stanhope, on his return to Harrington House after several years' absence in India, "Hallo, Linky, my dear boy, delighted to see you! Have a cup of tea!" Petersham carried on the family traditions, and Captain Gronow has described a visit to his apartments: "The room into which we were ushered was more like a shop than a gentleman's sitting-room. All around the wall were shelves, upon which were placed the canisters containing congou, pekoe, souchong, bohea, gunpowder, Russian, and many other teas, all the best of their kind; on the other side of the room were beautiful jars, with names in gilt letters, of innumerable kinds of snuff, and all the necessary apparatus for moistening and mixing. Lord Petersham's mixture is still well known to all tobacconists. Other shelves and many of the tables were covered with a great number of magnificent snuff-boxes; for Lord Petersham had perhaps the finest collection in England, and was supposed to have a fresh box for every day in the year. I heard him, on the occasion of a

delightful old light-blue Sèvres box he was using being admired, say in his lisping way, 'Yes, it is a nice summer box, but it would not do for winter wear.'" [1]

His affectations, which in another might have irritated, were more than compensated for by a kind heart and constancy to a wide circle of friends, with whom he was most popular. He took no part, however, in most of the pastimes of the day; and was especially averse to witnessing the pugilistic encounters so much patronised by the upper classes at that time. Once, however, he was persuaded to attend a fight, and told "Bill" Gibbons, of the Pugilistic Club, to call for him. Gibbons called early, before Petersham was dressed, and Lady Harrington, anxious to be courteous to one of her son's friends, insisted upon the prize-fighter sitting down to breakfast with her. Petersham's feelings when he entered were not easy to describe.

If pugilists were not to his lordship's taste, actors and actresses, however, most certainly were. He became attached to Maria Foote, of whom Genest says very frankly, "She was a very pretty woman, and a very pleasing actress, but she never would have travelled about as a star if it had

[1] See Lennox: *Drafts on my Memory*, i. 192–4.

not been for circumstances totally unconnected with the stage." [1] Those circumstances, of course, were her much-talked-of connections with various aristocratic or wealthy persons.

Maria, born in or about 1797, was the daughter of Samuel Foote, the actor. She made her first appearance at the Plymouth Theatre in 1810 as Juliet, and four years later made her London *début* at Covent Garden as Amanthis in Mrs. Inchbald's "Child of Nature," where she was received with acclamation on account, not so much of her talent as of her appearance,[2] her dancing, and her musical gifts. Though she never reached a high rank in her profession, she was popular enough to "star" at Cheltenham; and it was during her stay at that watering-place that she met the notorious William Fitzhardinge, better known as Colonel Berkeley, an excellent amateur actor, who proffered his services for her benefit, and eventually seduced her under a promise of marriage. He could not marry at the time, he declared, as he was just then petitioning the Crown to grant him the dormant earldom of Berkeley, and a marriage with an actress would

[1] *Account of the English Stage*, vol. ix. pp. 358–9.

[2] She is described as of medium height, with an oval face, expressive features, and a wealth of light brown hair.

inevitably prejudice the decision. For five years she lived with him and bore him two children; but then she broke off the connection—convinced, it is said, that he never meant to keep his word to marry her; but it must be confessed that it looks as if, had she so desired, she might have assured herself of his falseness years before.

That she was a very attractive woman all contemporary chroniclers agree, and Lord William Pitt Lennox, himself an ardent admirer of the actress,[1] declares that she was the reigning toast from her *début* at Covent Garden until her retirement from the stage in 1831; and he mentions, as proof of this, that upon one occasion when he was dining at the Catch Club, where existed the old fashion of calling upon each person present for a toast, no less than five noblemen gave her name, varying it, when reminded by the chairman that it had already been drunk, by substituting

[1] "In my eighteenth year I became a victim to her charms, and never omitted an opportunity of attending Covent Garden Theatre whenever she acted. As I was then quartered at Windsor, my gallantry was often put to the test, and on many a cold, raw, winter's afternoon, with the east wind nearly cutting me to pieces, have I travelled up outside the coach just in time to dine at the Piazza, and be in my place in the stage-box of the dress-circle before the curtain rose, having previously purchased at Covent Garden Market a choice bouquet, with orders to have it sent anonymously to the charmer, at the stage-door."—Lennox: *Drafts on my Memory.*

the name of one of her favourite characters, Amanthis, Rosalind, Maria Darlington, and Undine.

Even during the years of her association with Colonel Berkeley she had had many offers, not only of protection, but also of marriage; and now she was again a free woman she accepted the matrimonial proposals of the wealthy Joseph Haynes, of Burderup Park, Wiltshire, who is best remembered to-day as "Pea-green" Haynes, a nickname that attached itself to him from the colour of his coats. Haynes, who came into rivalry as a would-be leader of fashion with "Golden Ball," and had, probably owing to his smaller fortune, also been known as "Silver Ball," earned yet a third *sobriquet*, "Foote-Ball," when it was clear he had joined the ranks of the admirers of the fair Maria. The engagement was announced, but Haynes, who never knew his own mind, was persuaded by his friends that such a union would be deplorable, broke his promise, then again gave his word, and again broke it, until the actress's patience was exhausted by her vacillating lover, and she entered an action of breach of promise, setting the damages at £10,000. The trial, which excited much public interest, took place in 1825 in the Court of King's Bench before the Lord Chief Justice, and, in spite

of Scarlett's ingenuity, the jury returned a verdict for the plaintiff, with damages, £3,000.[1]

En passant, it maybe mentioned that the blackmailing scoundrel, Charles Molloy Wesmacott, writing under the pseudonym of "Bernard Blackmantle," weaved the history of Maria Foote, Colonel Berkeley, and "Pea-green" Haynes into a story, entitled "Fitzalleyne of Berkeley, A Romance of the Present Times," that so closely follows fact that it can scarcely be said to come under the heading of fiction.[2] Doubtless Westmacott expected that his silence would be bought, but in this he was disappointed, possibly either because his price was too high or because the affair had attracted so much attention that nothing could make the parties more notorious. Westmacott, however, doubtless felt himself compensated by the vogue for his book. Written with malice, the author at the outset arouses anger, yet something

[1] In a pamphlet, entitled *Facts Illustrative of the Evidence on the late Trial of Foote* v. *Haynes*: *with a Brief Review of the Speech of the Attorney-General* (second edition, 1825), a tremendous onslaught is made upon the actress, but it is so evidently a partisan publication that the "facts" are open to the gravest suspicion.

[2] In the novel Samuel Pous is Samuel Foote, Maria Pous, of course, his daughter Maria; Fitzalleyne of Berkeley is Colonel Berkeley, and Mary Carbon that Mary Cole, the butcher's daughter, who married the Earl of Berkeley. Lord A——y is Lord Alvanley; Major H——r, George Hanger; the Pea-green Count, Haynes, and Mr. Optimus, Tom Best, who shot Lord Camelford in a duel.

must be forgiven him for the bitter, yet, so far as we can judge to-day, just onslaught upon Colonel Berkeley in the rhymed introduction:

FITZALLEYNE AND MARIA,

AN ANCIENT ROMANCE.

"The Baron Fitzalleyne was handsome and young,
Smiles played on his features and guile on his tongue;
His form was majestic, his forehead was pale;
His father was noble—*his mother* was *frail.*

'Fitzalleyne was proud of baronial descent,
And his flatterers followed wherever he went;
When lo! rumour *bruited* a terrible tale:—
The youth was ignoble—the *mother* was frail.

"In vain young Fitzalleyne asserted his claim—
The *ancestral honours* were torn from his name;
The robe of nobility shrank from his touch,
And the tinsel and trappings he valued so much.

"Fitzalleyne possess'd all the talents that win
Fair woman from virtue, and plunge her in sin;
His victim was lured by arts hateful and mean.
And he taught them to be what *his mother had been.*"

The damages awarded to Maria Foote must have been ample recompense for the loss of her prospective husband, since Haynes was a very

second-rate dandy, and could only bring himself into prominence by such marked advertisement as a black servant and a prize-fighter in the rumble of his travelling carriage. "Some even court a place in a caricature shop-window; and it is confidently asserted that Pea-green desired to be introduced to the famous Cruikshanks, ambitioning that honour," says Westmacott contemptuously of this worthy; "he also dressed at publicity, by very long spurs, imitating the game-cock; and when *poodled* on the pate in a *négligée* to receive company, he wore a yellow damask or satin morning gown, which might have well become the king of the mountebanks, but he was no *conjurer*. He encouraged prize-fighters, courted the notice of the fancy, appeared at one of the battles with Bishop Sharp on his arm, and he got some Grub Street songs made about him, *ad captandum vulgus*, to get him a name, and he *did get one*—the composition was pretty much as poetical and interesting.

"Joe ***** is a noble *fellor*,
When sober and when he's mellor;
He cuts a most tremendous dash,
Because he has plenty of cash,
And Joe's a prime out-and-out fellor.
Chorus or roar us.

"Joe ***** is a gentleman miller;
He scatters his gold and his siller:
The ladies all like him, and say
There's nobody *goes* half so gay,
And Joe's a prime out-and-out fellor.
Chorus or roar us." [1]

"The lovely Maria," says William Bates, "who had missed one husband, whose distinction was the *colour* of his coat, managed, without much delay, to secure another who had achieved reputation for the *cut* and *material* of the same garment." [2] InMarch 1831 Miss Foote, now in her thirty-fifth year, made her last appearance on any stage, at Birmingham, and a month later married Lord Petersham, who, two years earlier, had succeeded, on his father's death, to the earldom of Harrington —to the dismay of his brother and heir-presumptive, who, according to Joseph Jekyll, has "flattered himself the noble earl would only philander with dramatic heroines, not marry one." The marriage, of course, was a nine days' wonder in society, and though we are told that the Countess conformed to her high position and henceforth led a blameless life, she was never received at court or countenanced by the greater part of society. The Earl,

[1] *Fitzalleyne of Berkeley.*
[2] *The Maclise Portrait Gallery. With Memoirs by William Bates.*

who was much annoyed by the ostracism of his wife, withdrew from public life, went to no house where his bride was not invited; and, so rumour has it, when Queen Victoria was in Derbyshire and expressed a desire to see Elvaston Castle, he sent word that his residence was not open to the public, but that if her Majesty put her wish as a command he would feel bound to obey.[1] Whatever feeling was entertained at first as to the wisdom of the marriage, there could be nothing but admiration for the attitude of the Earl towards the world.

But, indeed, the marriage was entirely successful; and, if there were many faultless persons who could not condone the union, there were more who could and did, so that Harrington House became a very agreeable *rendezvous*. There are many records of festivities there, and Joseph Jekyll noted in 1831: "At Harrington House a superb banquet and a jollification of twenty merry folk—Alvanley, George Colman, and James Smith of the 'Rejected Addresses,' and, more than this, Lord and Lady Tavistock." There were frequently to be found there those theatrical persons who had been on friendly terms with the Countess when on the stage, and no actor was made

[1] *The Maclise Portrait Gallery.*

more welcome than T. P. Cooke. Now and then an amusing episode occurred, as when Cooke was invited to dinner, the host having forgotten that on the evening in question he had a large political gathering. Cooke appeared, wearing his naval medal, and, when the ladies retired, moved up to his neighbour, Lord Aberdeen, who courteously led the conversation to naval affairs. Cooke gave so dramatic an account of an engagement in which he had taken part, that the Prime Minister was curious to know who he was, but as he did not like to put the question point-blank, he was unable to discover. Later, however, his curiosity was satisfied, for when he spoke of the blasphemous, hard-drinking sailor of an earlier day, contrasting him with the seaman of his own time, "If your lordship," said Cooke, "would like to see what a real tar was, and what he ought to be, come across the water some night—and see me as William in 'Black-Eye'd Susan'!"

The writer of the article in the *Dictionary of National Biography* states that the only child, a daughter, married George, second Marquis Conyngham; but this is wrong. Jane, who married the *third* Marquis Conyngham, was the second child, there having been born on December 31, 1831, a son and heir, Charles, Viscount

Petersham, who, however, died on April 8, 1836.[1] Lord Harrington died in his seventy-first year, on March 3, 1851, and his wife outlived him by sixteen years. He was succeeded in the title by his brother, Leicester Fitzgerald Charles Stanhope.

[1] "My friend, Lady Harrington, has produced a young Petersham, to the great dismay of a whiskerandos second brother of my Lord."—Joseph Jekyll: *Correspondence*, December 1831.

CHAPTER XX

LONG-WELLESLEY

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LONG-WELLESLEY

WILLIAM POLE WELLESLEY, afterwards fourth Earl of Mornington and second Baron Maryborough, was born on June 22, 1788, and is chiefly remembered for his extravagance, and for having married the "pocket Venus," Catherine Tylney-Long, whose hyphenated name he then inserted before his surname, and became known thenceforth as Long-Wellesley, a name commemorated in the "Loyal Effusion by W. T. F(itzgerald)" in "Rejected Addresses":

"Bless every man possessed of aught to give;
Long may Long-Tylney Wellesley Long Pole live."

[1] William Pole Wellesley, afterwards known as William Pole Tylney Long-Wellesley (1788–1857); succeeded as (fourth) Earl of Mornington, 1845.

Miss Tylney-Long, who was the sister and co-heiress of Sir James Tylney-Long, of Draycot, Wiltshire, had, besides a large personalty, estates in Essex and Hampshire, which were reputed to be worth more than a million. The lady was consequently besieged, not only by admirers, but also by fortune-hunters; and it is said that when she drove in the Park her suitors rode round her carriage as the Guards surrounded the King's. Especially prominent among those who aspired to her hand were Baron Ferdinand de Géramb and "Romeo" Coates.

There were many who asserted that Baron de Géramb was not a nobleman, and that he was a German Jew who, having married the widow of a Hungarian Baron, assumed her first husband's title; while others believed him to be a French refugee. His rank as a German general, however, gave him the *entrée* to London society, and he attracted much attention in his walks abroad by his ringlets, his superb moustaches, and his immense spurs. Soon the dandies copied him, and moustaches *à la* Géramb, gold spurs several inches long, and tight-laced coats were the fashion—a fashion that Byron noticed in "The Waltz," when he remarked that corsets were

" Transferred to those ambiguous things that ape
Goats in their visage, women in their shape."

Taken up by the Prince Regent, he became a power in what may be called the costume department of the War Office, and designed for the British army the uniform of the Hussars. After a time, however, he was ordered out of England in April 1812, under the Alien Act, being regarded as an impostor when he offered—at a price—to raise twenty-four thousand Croatian troops to proceed against Napoleon. On the Continent he wrote against Napoleon, who imprisoned him at Vincennes; whereupon the General made a vow that if he was released he would renounce the world, the flesh, and the devil, and become a monk. He kept his word, entered a Trappist monastery under the name of Brother Joseph, and before his death, in 1848, had become Abbot and Procurator-General of the Order.[1]

Robert Coates, or, as he was always called, " Diamond " or " Romeo " Coates, was an eccentric who must not be passed over in silence, for if some of his contemporaries were as foolish, at least he stands pre-eminent as the vainest man of his day. The son of a sugar-planter at Antigua,

[1] Larwood: *Story of the London Parks*, vol. i. pp. 279–80; Lady Dorothy Nevill: *Reminiscences*; etc.

he was sent to England to be educated, and returned to his distant home in 1805. On the death of his father, two years later, he inherited a considerable fortune, and at once came back to England. He arrived at the York Hotel, Bath, in 1808, and attracted much attention in that still fashionable watering-place. Though then but six-and-thirty, he looked so much older that Captain Gronow took him for fifty, for, while his figure was good, his sallow face—which, says Gronow, was more expressive of cunning than of any other quality—was seamed with wrinkles.

Notoriety comes easily to those who seek it at any cost, and Coates, being entirely free from sensitiveness, secured it by his costume and equipage. In the day-time, at all seasons of the year, he appeared covered with enormous quantities of fur—for which the fact that he had been born in a tropical country and felt the cold of a more northern land may, perhaps, be accepted as some explanation; but his gaudy evening attire, chiefly remarkable for his diamond buttons and diamond knee-buckles, cannot be excused. But these manifestations of bad taste were entirely eclipsed by his curricle. "Its shape was that of a scallop shell," writes Coates's biographers; "the outside

"ROMEO" COATES.

was painted a beautiful rich lake colour, and bore its owner's heraldic device—a cock, life-size, with outspread wings, and over this the motto, 'While I live I'll crow.' The step to enter the vehicle was also in the form of a cock. The interior was richly lined and upholstered, and the whole mounted upon light springs with a pair of high wheels picked out in well-chosen colours. The vehicle was drawn by two white horses of faultless figure and action, which must have been matched and acquired at great cost. Their trappings were of the latest fashion, and ornamented with the crowing cock in silver. The horses were driven in pair, and the splinter bar was surmounted by a carved brass rod; on top of this stood a plated cock, crowing."[1]

Having now succeeded in focussing the eyes of all Bath upon his unattractive society, Coates sighed for fresh worlds to conquer; and, recalling his success as an amateur actor in Antigua, he was overwhelmed with a desire to repeat his histrionic triumphs. He made the acquaintance of Pryce Lockhart Gordon, who heard him re-

[1] J. H. and H. H. Robinson: *Life of Robert Coates.*

cite some passages from Shakespeare, and, observing that he did not always adhere to the text, at one place ventured to correct him. "Aye," retorted Coates, "that is the reading I know, for I have the play by heart, but I think I have improved upon it!"

Gordon was acquainted with Demond, the manager of the Bath Theatre, who, finding that Scrope Davies and others were willing to take boxes, consented to allow Coates to make his *début* on the English stage at Bath, and announced that on February 9, 1810, "a Gentleman of Fashion would make his appearance for the first time in England" as Romeo.

Pryce Gordon "packed" the pit, but not even this precaution availed, for howls of laughter greeted "the Amateur of Fashion" on his first entrance, when it was seen that he was dressed in "a cloak of sky-blue, profusely spangled, red pantaloons, a vest of white muslin, surrounded by an enormously thick cravat, and a wig *à la* Charles the Second, capped by an opera hat."[1]

[1] Gronow: *Reminiscences.*

Lord William Pitt Lennox also gives a description of Coates as Romeo, but probably he saw him at a subsequent performance. "The aspirant for histrionic fame presented himself in the most charming of sentimental dramas with the complexion of a Creole, set off by a woolly head of hair, in a suit of spangled white satin, that made him appear doubly dingy."—*Biographical Reminiscences.*

Of course, the performance was a dire failure, for Coates's absurd attitudinising, his ridiculous ranting, and his voice, with a metallic twang, produced a most ludicrous effect, which convulsed the audience with merriment. Still, such was "Romeo" Coates's egregious vanity that he thought the majority of the audience was impressed, and he was so delighted with himself that at the conclusion of the piece, he cried from the stage, "Haven't I done it well?"

Unable to realise he had failed, he repeated his impersonation at Richmond and Brighton, and he probably never knew—and would not have cared if he had—that a dramatic critic at the latter place wrote that "the performances astonished the aquatics and submarines of the Sussex coast." Having, in his own opinion, conquered the provinces, he now appeared in London. He made his *début* on December 9, 1811, as Lothario, in Rowe's since-forgotten tragedy of "The Fair Penitent." Shortly after he performed Romeo at the Haymarket Theatre "with such effect, indeed, we are told, that his dying scene—an outrageous burlesque—was encored; and in compliance with the enthusiastic call, as he considered it, the delighted actor died over again."[1]

[1] Lennox: *Biographical Reminiscences.*

Coates was most anxious to be presented to the Prince Regent, and when he received a card of invitation to a *fête* at Carlton House, his joy knew no bounds. He purchased a new and more than usually outrageous costume for the occasion, and duly presented himself on the appointed evening, only to learn that the card of invitation was a forgery—the work, it subsequently transpired, of Theodore Hook, then on the eve of his departure for his brief, ill-fated sojourn at the Mauritius. The incident was told to the Prince, who was very angry at the unauthorised use of his name, and, with a kindness foreign to his nature, gave orders that the decorations should not be touched, and sent an invitation to poor, foolish, broken-hearted "Curricle" Coates, to mention another of his nicknames, to come and inspect them before they were demolished.

"With two thousand a year, he might be comfortable as a domestic man; what he is as a *fashionable*, or a sportsman, is known to everybody," said a writer in *The Scourge*. "Unfortunately, the flattery of Bacchanalian dependants, the puffs of dramatic parasites, and the indulgence of the easy and unintelligent part of the community, have converted a simple and well-meaning clown into a victim of dissipation and

a professor of absurdity. With a fortune that, prudently expended, might purchase every necessary comfort, and every elegant pleasure, he lives on the scale of a banker's clerk, and, mean at home, is miserable abroad.

"In the account of the *levée* contained in the morning papers, it is asserted, and asserted, as I am informed, with truth, that Mr. Coates attended in a dress, of which the ornaments were valued at more than five thousand pounds. Nothing need be said of the contemptible vanity of wearing appendages so comparatively trifling in value, merely for the purpose of displaying his finery in the newspapers. It is better to throw aside the use of diamonds altogether than to swagger before a splendid circle of spectators, in the despicable obtrusion of needy splendour. But what will be the surprise of yourself and your readers to be informed that this Mr. 'Romeo' Coates, who expends five thousand pounds on a gala dress, and plies the convenient Dr. Williams with Sabbath bribes, resides in a petty lodging-house in Craven Street, and condescends to dine at a *stinted* board, that he may adorn his person, support a theatrical critic, and feed his horses! He attends at Barnet races, and after *running away* (as he expresses it) with the palm of

'Tittism,' returns to partake of his limited number of cups of tea, and his prescribed proportion of the family slops."[1]

No economies of this sort could counterbalance his extravagances, and when his income was in 1825 seriously affected by the troubles in the West India Islands in the previous year, Coates was compelled to retrench.

> "And see! where everybody notes
> The Star of Fashion, 'Romeo' Coates
> The Amateur appears.
> But where? Ah! where, say, shall I tell,
> Are the brass cocks and cockle-shell?
> I'll hazard *rouge et noir*,
> If it but speak, can tales relate
> Of many an equipage's fate.
> And may of many more."[2]

Coates subsequently retired to Boulogne, pending the arrangement of his affairs, and whilst there he married. He returned to London after some years, and lived in turn in Connaught Square, at 13, Portman Square, and 28, Montagu Square, at which last residence he died from the result

[1] August, 1812.

[2] *The English Spy.* The verses have this footnote attached to them: "Poor Romeo's brilliancy is somewhat dulled, and though not quite a fallen star he must not run on black too long lest his diamond-hilted sword should be the price of his folly."

of an accident, in 1848, in his seventy-seventh year.

The Duke of Clarence was also among those who desired to marry Miss Tylney-Long, and he proposed to her in 1811.

> "And since no female can withstand
> The tempting offer of your hand,
> On fair Miss T——y L—g bestow
> Title and equipage and show."

So ran a doggerel rhyme of the day; but Miss Tylney-Long knew that his Royal Highness wooed her mainly, if not entirely, on account of her possessions, and as, in addition, she had realised the drawbacks of a morganatic alliance, with many thanks she declined the offer. It may have been the fear lest pressure would be brought to bear upon her to reverse her decision that induced her to put this out of the question by engaging herself to marry Pole Wellesley, who had long sought her hand. Certainly, after the Prince had avowed his matrimonial intentions, she listened more gently to Wellesley, whose overtures before this time she had repeatedly rejected.

It is possible, however, that the heiress's feelings towards Wellesley underwent a change

when he fought a duel, as it was generally supposed, in which she was the cause of the quarrel. There were words between Wellesley and Lord Kilworth at an assembly at Lady Hawarden's on August 6, 1811, and three days later a meeting took place on Wimbledon Common, at which the seconds intervened, and everything was "amicably adjusted." On the 14th inst., however, a letter appeared in *The Morning Post* asserting that Wellesley had apologised, and this led to a second meeting on the next day at Hounslow Heath, when, after an interchange of shots, the seconds again intervened, and the matter was arranged. The cause of the quarrel was not divulged, but, as the following *jeu d'esprit* goes to prove, it was, at least, generally surmised. Byron has a reference to it:

"Hail, spirit-stirring Waltz!—beneath whose banners
A modern hero fought for modish manners;
On Hounslow's heath to rival Wellesley's fame,
Cock't—fired—and missed his man—but gained his aim." [1]

A contemporary rhymester also had his say in the matter:

[1] *The Waltz.*

"An Impromptu

"On Leaving Wanstead House *fête*.[1]

"By Mr. W—— P——, jun.

"Though my feet capered first with the smart Emma L—g,
My eyes danced in chase of her sister,
And salt tears never failed in their sockets to throng,
Whene'er for a moment they missed her.

"So bewitching her jewels,—attractive her self,
Titled Lads throng in troops to ensnare her;
But by J——s! I vow, by my own precious self,
That a W—s—y shall win her, and wear her!

"'Mid the tumult of *waltzing*, and with wild *Irish* reels,
As prime dancer I'm sure to get at her;
And by Love's graceful movements to trip up her heels,
As the Long and the short of the matter!"[2]

From the first young Wellesley had wanted, not the lady, but her fortune. In his teens he had been sent to Russia, and when he returned to England, at the age of one-and-twenty, he was so wild that he was sent as an ensign into the Suffolks to keep him out of mischief. He went to Portugal on the staff of his uncle, the "Iron Duke," and was present at the battle of Vimiera. He came home, and one day as he lay in bed

[1] Wanstead House, near Hackney, was the residence of Miss Tylney-Long.

[2] *The Morning Chronicle*, August 16, 1811.

he began to consider what he should do. George Elers has recorded, "He was in debt and difficulties. A sudden thought struck him. His mother was on terms of great intimacy with Lady Catherine Long, the mother of the rich heiress. He wrote to his mamma, and conjured her to do all in her power of putting him in Miss Long's company. He proposed six times and was refused. He proposed a seventh time and was accepted."

The marriage took place in 1812, and was celebrated with great splendour: a contemporary account describes the bride as attired in a gown of real Brussels point lace. The design was a spray, draped over a skirt of white satin, and wearing a cottage bonnet of the same lace, with two ostrich feathers, a deep lace veil, and a satin pelisse trimmed with swansdown. "The gown cost seven hundred guineas, the bonnet one hundred and fifty guineas, and the veil two hundred guineas." The chronicler continues: "The lady's jewels consisted principally of a necklace and earrings of brilliants, the former cost twenty-five thousand guineas; eight hundred wedding favours were distributed, worth a guinea and a half each, besides others of an inferior quality and price."

It was a sorry union for the heiress. Having

until now lived in luxury entirely in inverse ratio to his means, and having run through his own fortune, the happy bridegroom, now the possessor of a life-interest in his wife's great fortune, squandered vast sums. He was a well-known figure about town, where he drove a plain black Tilbury with a superb grey "with action high as the Monument," says Lord William Pitt Lennox; and he now became famous for his magnificent suppers after the Opera at Wanstead House.[1] No fortune could stand the inroads made upon it by this spendthrift, and, when he had raised all the money that could be obtained upon the security of his

[1] "The mansion at Wanstead, standing in an extensive park, was a very large and magnificent structure. The front was 260 feet long; the entrance in the centre being beneath a grand portico of six Corinthian columns, having a flight of steps on each side, and in the tympanium the arms of the Tylney family finely sculptured. The architect was the well-known Colin Campbell, who received great praise for the science and judgment displayed in this work. The great hall, fifty-one feet by thirty-six, was decorated and furnished with all the splendour of the last century; the ball-room, seventy-five feet by twenty-seven, was magnificently fitted up, and the dining-room and saloons were furnished with corresponding taste and luxury. Most of the ceilings in the grand apartments were painted by Kent, a portrait of whom hung in the hall. The mansion also contained some fine paintings: among these were a Raphael, a Correggio, and a Lely, also several by Cassali and other eminent old and new artists. The grounds contained a curious and interesting grotto, constructed by the second Earl Tylney, which cost some £2,000 to erect, independent of materials."—J. H. and H. H. Robinson: *Life of Robert Coates.*

life-interest in his wife's property, the end was inevitable.

"Where's Brummell? Dished. "Where's Long Pole Wellesley? Diddled,"

wrote Byron in 1822; and on July 8 of that year appeared the announcement of the sale of the furniture of Wanstead House.

Long-Wellesley was saved from the vengeance of his creditors by being given a post in the Household, duly announced in the *London Gazette* of August 6, 1822, as "Gentleman Usher, daily waiter to his Majesty," which exempted him from arrest; but in the same year he left England for the Continent, where, from 1823, he lived with Helena,[1] widow of Captain Thomas Bligh of the Coldstream Guards. On September 12, 1825, died Mrs. Long-Wellesley, who had filed a bill for divorce, and had taken the precaution to make the five children of the union wards of Chancery. Three years later Wellesley married Mrs. Bligh, but this lady fared as badly at his hands as his first wife. She, too, was deserted, and for the last twenty years of his life lived apart from him, almost penniless, compelled to

[1] Helena, third daughter of Colonel Thomas Paterson, claimed "a direct royal descent from the Plantagenets."

live in a garret, and from time to time forced to apply, as Countess of Mornington, to a police magistrate or to the parish for temporary assistance.

Obituary notices are almost invariably tempered with mercy, and bad indeed must have been the man of whom it was written: "A spendthrift, a profligate, and gambler in his youth, he became a debauchee in his manhood, and achieved the prime disgrace of being the second person whom the Court of Chancery deprived of paternal rights, and withdrawing out of his care his children, whose early tutors and whose morals he wickedly endeavoured to corrupt, from a malicious desire to add to the agonies of their desolate and broken-hearted mother. Redeemed by no single virtue, adorned by no single grace, his life has gone out, even without a flicker of repentance—his 'retirement' was that of one who was deservedly avoided by all men. We have no wish further to illustrate such a theme by writing what should be his epitaph."[1]

For years before his death on July 1, 1857, Long-Wellesley had lived in lodgings. He was a member of parliament from 1812 to 1832, representing in turn Wiltshire, St. Ives, and

[1] *The Morning Chronicle*, July 4, 1857.

Essex; and he was one of the Tories who, on November 15, 1830, succeeded in defeating the Wellington Ministry. Otherwise, his career in the House of Commons was uneventful, though a misdeed of his brought him into temporary notoriety. In July 1831 he removed his daughter from the guardian appointed by the Court of Chancery; whereupon Lord Brougham, then Lord Chancellor, committed him to the Fleet for contempt of court, officially informed Mr. Speaker Sutton of his action, and refused the application of the Sergeant-at-Arms to surrender his prisoner, who claimed privilege as a member of parliament. Long-Wellesley was permitted to remain at his house in Dover Street in charge of two officers of the Court of Chancery, and further trouble was averted by the girl being restored to the authorities.

In 1845 the third Earl of Mornington died, and Long-Wellesley came into the title; but by this time he had disappeared from society—which, indeed, was no longer inclined to receive him. He spent the last years of his life in lodgings in Mayer Street, Manchester Square, London, deeply involved in debt, and subsisting on a small allowance, the bounty of his cousin, the second Duke of Wellington. His wife

outlived, but can scarcely have regretted, him; while the news of his decease was welcomed by his numerous creditors, who were secured by large insurances on his life.[1]

[1] He was succeeded by his eldest son, William Richard Arthur Pole Tylney Long-Wellesley, who was born in 1813, and died unmarried in 1863, when the Irish earldom of Mornington passed to the Duke of Wellington, and the English barony of Maryborough became extinct.

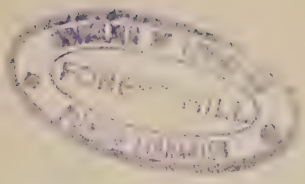
CHAPTER XXI

"APOLLO"

From an etching by Richard Dighton (1818).

"ONE OF THE RAKES OF LONDON."

(Thomas Raikes.)



CHAPTER XXI

"APOLLO"[1]

WHATEVER view is taken of Thomas Raikes, there can be no question but that after Brummell's flight, he gradually became a personage in polite circles. The son of a rich city merchant, and Charlotte Finch, a granddaughter of Daniel, Earl of Winchelsea, he was born on October 3, 1777, and educated at Oxford, where he made the acquaintance of Brummell and other youths who were to become notorious among the *beaux*. After going abroad for a couple of years to acquire modern languages, he returned to England to become a partner in his father's business. Soon after, in 1802, he married Sophia, daughter of Nathaniel Bayly, a West Indian proprietor[2]; and lived in Berkeley

[1] Thomas Raikes, 1777-1848.

[2] There was issue of this marriage: one son, Henry Thomas Raikes, afterwards Judge of the High Court at Calcutta, and three daughters.

Square; but after her death, in 1810, he threw himself into fashionable life, perhaps in the endeavour to forget his loss.

Commerce, however, had never had any particular attraction for him, and now every hour he could snatch from his office was spent at Watier's or White's, of which he became a member about this time. The dandies nicknamed him "Apollo," "because he rose in the east and set in the west,"[1] and were generally inclined to make a butt of him. Certainly his appearance was not in his favour, for he was pitted with small-pox, which gave D'Orsay the opportunity to say when he received an anonymous letter sealed with a thimble, which he believed came from Raikes: "I am strengthened in my opinion, for he has evidently sealed it with his nose!" It was not always a safe amusement, however, to make fun of Raikes, because on occasion he would "kick out sometimes, and to some purpose."

One such instance has been preserved by Creevey. "Yesterday, about 3 p.m.," wrote the diarist on March 3, 1827, "Dandy Raikes, who

[1] "Here trips commercial dandy Ra-k-s,
Who never plays for heavy stakes,
But looks to the *main chance.*"
—*The English Spy.*

is a member of Brooks's, but was never seen there before, having watched Brougham go in there, followed him, and taking a position with his back to the fire, said aloud: 'Mr. Brougham, I am very much obliged to you for the speech at my expense. I don't know what latitude you gentlemen of the bar consider yourselves entitled to, but I am come here purposely to insult you in the presence of your club.' . . . Brougham was eating some soup, and merely replied with great composure: 'Mr. Raikes, you have chosen a strange place and occasion for offering your insult.'" The matter was taken up by the committee, "Brooks's Parliament" old Creevey calls it, with the result that Raikes sent an apology to the Club. This left the matter open between Brougham and Raikes, and it seemed as if there could be no other issue than a duel. Matters had got so far that Raikes secured "Kangaroo" Cooke for his second, but the affair ended by Brougham being taken into custody, and bound over to keep the peace. It leaked out afterwards that Spring Rice had given information to the authorities, "his only object, I have no doubt," says Creevey, "being not to lose Brougham's vote to-night upon that most vital of all subjects—the Catholic Question."

Raikes has been described by some anonymous writer as "an old Toryfied prig, and an extremely self-contented and self-important chatterbox: a Spence maundering about continually without a Pope, a Boswell never stumbling upon his Johnson, but ever and ever self-conscious, as though he stood always in the midst of a cluster of cheval glasses, full of his own reflections! Briefly and more accurately, Mr. Pepys' shadow modernised." This is clearly libellous, for he was not an unpleasant man, and was, to some extent, a favourite with his brother dandies, who, however, may have been somewhat puzzled when called upon for an estimate of him. Thus, within the limits of five pages, we find two dissimilar descriptions given by Lord William Pitt Lennox:

"No one appeared oftener at White's bay-window than he did, no one was a more servile turf-hunter than he was, no one a greater *gobemouche* or gossip, or *flaneur*."[1]

"In society Raikes was a pleasant companion, a good listener, an agreeable retailer of anecdotes, *bon-mots* and *calembours*, not of the newest sort, but usually well applied to the topics of the day."[2]

[1] Lennox: *Celebrities I have Known.* Second Series, ii. 92.
[2] Ibid., p. 97.

Lord William, who filled many volumes with his reminiscences, is not, however, a man whose words can be accepted, not because he was deliberately untruthful—far from it—but because he was so frequently in contradiction to himself. One further example of this may be given, since it occurs also in connection with Raikes—not his character this time, but his Journals. In "Drafts on my Memory," published in 1866, we read that Raikes "possessed a large amount of quiet conversational powers, and was of a reflecting turn of mind, as his Diary will prove"; and ten years later in the second series of "Celebrities I have Known," "The Diary of Thomas Raikes, Esq., is full of tittle-tattle, gossip, *canards*, Gallic idioms, and worn-out Joe Miller jokes." The truth is, that the Diary, which appeared in 1856, edited by his second daughter, Harriet,[1] is a compound of gossip and

[1] "Greville's best point was his readiness, when any occasion arose for it, to spare no effort to serve a friend. But honesty obliges me to add that he dearly loved to have a finger in every pie, which may have been an inducement to him to occupy himself about his friends' affairs. When Miss Raikes published her father's amusing diary he helped her with her publishers, but made them some concessions of which she disapproved. The next time he called, to show her displeasure, she seized his hat, ran upstairs, and locked it up in her bedroom; and then came down and told him he might go home bareheaded, which he was forced to do. I do not know whether he ever forgave her."—F. Leveson Gower: *Bygone Days*.

sound common-sense reflections upon men and events, and especially French and Spanish affairs; and should be read in connection with Raikes's other publications, for Raikes, though no active politician, was *au courant* with the political as well as the society intelligence of the day, as may be learnt from the perusal of his correspondence with such different folk as the Duke of Wellington, Alvanley, Lord Cowley, Brummell, "Kangaroo" Cooke, Charles Greville, Lord Rokeby, and Scrope Davies, among others.

Indeed, Raikes's life was, at least, less useless, and in spite of the sneers levelled at him by the dandies, his intelligence was more active, and its exercise better directed than was the case with most of his comrades of White's bow-window. Thus, he travelled much after the death of his wife, in 1814 staying for some time at The Hague with Lord Clancarty, the English Ambassador, visiting Paris in that year, and in 1819 and 1820, and subsequently, going to Russia, printing his impressions of that country in a volume bearing the title "Visit to St. Petersburg, 1829-30."

Raikes still remained in business, and was a figure of sufficient importance in civic circles to be put up, at the meeting of City merchants

at the London Tavern, on November 13, 1832, to propose the second resolution against the war with Holland. Whether due to want of attention to the affairs of his commercial house, cannot now be said, but in the year 1832, to quote from the preface of his Journals, which began in that year, although relating to much that had occurred in earlier days, "embarrassments of the house with which he was connected compelled him to break up his establishment in London, and to settle in Paris, where he remained till 1846."

During this time he wrote his impressions of "France since 1830," and sought relaxation by visiting in 1838 Carlsbad and Venice with Lord Yarmouth, and in the following year Naples and Rome with Lord Alvanley; while in October 1841 he came to England, indulging in the hope that, now the Tories were in office, the Duke of Wellington would exert himself to secure for him a post under Government. In this matter he was disappointed, and it was added sorrow to find that most of his friends of earlier days had either died or retired, voluntarily or compulsorily, from London life. "I find London very much altered," he noted in his Journal. "The change in society has become very apparent within the last few years. It was called, and perhaps justly, in my

time, dissipated; but the leaders were men of sense and talent, with polished manners and generally high-minded feelings. The young men of the day seem without prominent feature of character; indifferent, instead of fastidious; careless in their manner to the women, and making it the fashion to *afficher* a heartless, selfish tone of feeling, such as would not be tolerated in French society, where the women certainly maintain a social influence that is not to be observed here. There is a great deal of beauty in the London drawing-rooms; but hardly any of those *égards pour les convenances* which, abroad, is the simplest and most natural form of high-breeding, and which is shown in dress as well as in manner and in language. Steam has here dissolved the exclusive system, and seems to have substituted the love of wealth and of social distinction." That this is a fair and unbiassed view of the society of the early Victorian days is borne out by all observers who have recorded their impressions; and it was but natural that Raikes, in spite of a dinner at White's with Alvanley, Allen, and Standish, which "put me in mind of old times," should feel out of touch with the general company, and find himself more at home in Paris.

Yet he came to England again in 1843, and three years later left France, never to return. He was now an elderly man, not inclined to make new acquaintances; and after paying a long visit to his friend, Lord Gengall, in Ireland, he went to Bath to be near a still older friend, Lord Alvanley, who was confined there by illness. His own health began to decline, and from the Spa he went to Brighton, where he remained until his death, which took place on July 3, 1848, in his seventy-first year.

CHAPTER XXII

"GOLDEN BALL"

From an etching by Richard Dighton (1819).

"THE GOLDEN BALL."

(Edward Hughes Ball Hughes.)

CHAPTER XXII

"GOLDEN BALL"[1]

THE parentage of Edward Hughes Ball, like that of another famous but mythical dandy, Jeames de la Pluche, was apparently "wropt in mystery," so far, at least, as many of his contemporaries were concerned; for, though he died less than half a century ago, all the accounts of his origin differ. Bates, in his edition of "The Maclise Portrait Gallery," states that "another favoured child of fortune, named Hughes, the son, as was said, of a slop-seller in Ratcliffe Highway, having succeeded to the enormous fortune—some forty thousand pounds *per annum*—of his uncle, Admiral Sir Alexander Ball, added the name of this latter to his own, and became known as the 'Golden Ball.'"[2] In "The English

[1] Edward Hughes Ball, afterwards known as Edward Hughes Ball Hughes (died 1863).

[2] Jacob Larwood, in his *Story of the London Parks*, vol. i. p. 315, also states that Hughes's fortune came to him from his uncle, Sir Alexander Ball.

Spy," Westmacott, who had heard much of Hughes Ball, puts a different version into the mouth of a stage coachman: "A gemman who often comes down with me says 'Golden Ball's' father was a slop-seller in Ratcliffe Highway, and after marrying the widow of Admiral Hughes, a rich old West Indian nabob, he left this young gemman the bulk of his property." As a matter of fact, the writers quoted were in error: there was no slop-seller and no Sir Alexander Ball in the true version, which runs very simply. Hughes was the son of Captain Ball, of the Royal Navy, whose widow, Ruth, married Admiral Sir Edward Hughes. There were no children of the latter union, and the Admiral left the vast fortune he had amassed during his command of the fleet in the Indian seas to his stepson, who eventually added the name of Hughes to his patronymic.

After being educated at Eton, Ball Hughes entered the 7th Hussars, and remained in the army for a while; but abandoned it to take up the profession of dandyism, for which he was qualified, according to Major Chambre, by a handsome face, a commanding figure, exquisite taste in dress, as well as the not inconsiderable advantage of an income of £40,000 a year, which was the more to the point because it was without

the drawback of an expensive country seat to keep up. Larwood supports this testimony, and asserts that those who saw Hughes's well-appointed chocolate-coloured coach, with its team of four white horses, and two neat grooms in brown liveries behind, perceived that it was possible for a gentleman to drive four-in-hand without adopting the dress or manners of a stage coachman.[1]

Not all are agreed upon his qualifications as a *beau*, and his brother-dandy, Lord William Pitt Lennox, passed very severe strictures upon him, contrasting him with the great master who had gone before. "Brummell set the fashion; Ball Hughes merely followed it," he said; and proceeded to detail the indictment. "He cared little for music, but had an opera-box at Her Majesty's Theatre because it was the fashion. A play bored him, but he had a box at Covent Garden because it was the fashion; he disliked hunting, but kept a large stud of hunters in Northamptonshire because hunting was the fashion; he knew little about a race, but patronised Epsom, Ascot, and Goodwood, and occasionally rode himself, because it was the fashion; he was a very sorry amateur dramatic performer, but he always supported private theatricals because they were the fashion;

[1] *Story of the London Parks*, vol. i. p. 315.

he was a bad hand at rackets, but was occasionally to be seen in the Tennis-court, James Street,[1] Haymarket, because it was the fashion; he would shoot at pheasants because it was the fashion; moreover, he gave countenance to the pugilistic ring because it was the fashion." Not content even with this onslaught, Lord William continued: "Nothing could be more absurd than the way he carried on hunting. He kept his horses at Blisworth, and the evening before the hounds were to meet he would post down with four horses to Northampton, sleep at the George Inn, knock the billiard balls about, because it was the fashion, and the next morning he would be seen at the covert's side, exquisitely dressed. A run he never saw; for when the hounds went away he would ride back to the inn, have luncheon, and be back for a late dinner in London. Occasionally he would go a few fields with them, or pound along a road; but he had no love for the chase. He was always admirably well mounted, and was very liberal in taking a friend to Northampton and mounting him. The drawback was that, if his friend went to the run, the chances were that he would have to find his way back to London; for Ball Hughes was always in

[1] Now Orange Street.

a hurry to get home to his residence, Brook Street."

Yet even if these accusations were true, and it seems probable that they were—for even allowing for a spice of malice in a rival dandy's description, Lord William Pitt Lennox knew Ball Hughes well, whereas Major Chambre had but a slight acquaintance with the subject of his encomiums—Ball Hughes was not a contemptible person, for all alike pay tribute to his amiability and good nature, and agree that his popularity among his intimates, when, discarding his affectations, he was full of fun and anecdote, was very considerable.

Yet, in spite of the perfection of his dress, his excellent horses, his neat liveries, his well-appointed equipages, his admirable dinners at his house in Brook Street, Ball Hughes never made any headway in general society, perhaps because, again to quote Lord William, "his manner in public was too coxcombical; he screwed his mouth up, and lisped or drawled forth his words; when he walked he appeared, to adopt a common phrase, as if 'he was on stilts, and had swallowed the kitchen poker.'" Indeed, with all his good looks, backed by vast wealth, and the good qualities already enumerated, he

was singularly unfortunate in his love affairs, and was rejected in succession by Lady Jane Paget,[1] the daughter of his colonel, the Earl of Uxbridge, Miss Floyd,[2] and Lady Caroline Churchill.[3]

It seems, however, as if there had been at one time an engagement between him and an aristocratic lady [was it Lady Jane Paget?], for Westmacott writes about it as if it were a matter of common knowledge. "It is not long since that, inspired by love or ambition, a wealthy commoner sought the promise of the fair hand of Lady J——, nor was the consent of her noble father (influenced by certain weighty reasons) wanting to complete the anticipated happiness of the suitor. All the preliminary forms were arranged—jointure and pin-money liberally fixed —some legal objections as to a *covenant of forfeiture* overcome, a suitable establishment provided. The happy day was fixed, when—'mark inconstant, fickle woman'—the evening previous to completion (to the surprise of all the town) she changed her mind; she had reconsidered the subject! The man was wealthy,

[1] Lady Jane Paget subsequently married the Marquis of Anglesea.
[2] Miss Floyd later became the wife of Sir Robert Peel.
[3] Afterwards Lady Caroline Pennant.

and attractive in person; but then—insupportable objection—he was a mere plebeian, a common esquire, and his name was odious—Lady J—— B——l, she could never endure it; the degrading thought produced a fainting fit—the recovery a positive refusal—the circumstance a week's amusement to the fashionable world. Reflection and disappointment succeeded, and a revival was more than once spoken of; but the recent marriage of the bachelor put an end to all conjecture, and the poor lady was for some time left to bewail in secret her single destiny. Who can say, when a lady has the golden ball at her foot, where she may kick it? Circumstances which have occurred since the above was written prove that the lady has anticipated our advice." [1]

Ball Hughes, or "Golden Ball" as he was familiarly called, was not, in spite of these misfortunes, doomed to bachelorhood. In 1822, engaged at a considerable sum of eight hundred pounds for the season, appeared at the King's Theatre, a new Spanish dancer, Maria Mercandotti,

[1] "Now, by my faith, it gives me pain
To see thee, cruel Lady J——,
Regret the *golden Ball.*
'Tis useless now:—'the fox and grapes'
Remember, and avoid the apes
Which wait an *old maid's* fall."
—*The English Spy.*

who, as Moore noted at the time of her *début*, was a "beautiful little girl, most perfectly shaped, and promises to be a first-rate dancer." Mademoiselle Mercandotti, who was only fifteen years of age, came to this country under the chaperonage of her mother, but Lord Fife was known to take a very great interest in the girl, who, it was rumoured, was his natural daughter.

Lord Fife, a good-tempered man, and most courtly in his manners, was an intimate of the Prince Regent, and so regular an attendant at the ballet at the King's Theatre in the Haymarket that it gave rise to a common saying, "No fife, no dance." "Fife," wrote Westmacott in the *St. James's Royal Magazine* (March 1826), "has the secret to amuse himself and others without creating an enemy in the pursuit of pleasure." He, in common with other men of fashion, had the *entrée* behind the scenes, for at one of those visits he met Mademoiselle Noblet,[1] a celebrated

[1] Mademoiselle Noblet, like most opera-dancers of that day, was not above suspicion, as the following shows:

"Innumerable are the traps which have been laid by the King for the Peers, to obtain their votes on the Fortification Bill. Among other lures is that which gained the adhesion of General Claparede. Mademoiselle Noblet, his mistress, had long been dismissed from the theatre; a royal order had been given for her re-admission and engagement on very favourable terms, which won the heart and vote of her gallant protector."—Raikes: *Journal*, April 8, 1841.

From an etching by Richard Dighton.

"A DISCHARGED FIFER."

(Lord Fife.)

Parisian dancer engaged for a season in London, who extracted from him money and presents to the value of forty thousand pounds.

> " Here Scotland's dandy Irish Earl,
> With Noblet on his arm would whirl,
> And frolic in this sphere ;
> With mulberry coat, and pink Cossacks,
> The red-haired Thane the fair attacks,
> F——'s ever on the leer ;
> And when alone, to every belle
> The am'rous beau love's tale will tell,
> Intent upon their ruin." [1]

So wrote Westmacott, a little spitefully, perhaps ; and the same author presents little Maria in the green-room : " Before the mirror, in all the grace of youthful loveliness and perfect symmetry of form, the divine little fairy sprite, the all-conquering Andalusian Venus, Mercandotti, was exhibiting her soft, plump, love-inspiring person in a *pirouette* ; before her stood the elegant H—— B——, on whose shoulder rested the Earl of F——e, admiring with equal ecstasy the finished movements of his accomplished *protégée*." The pretty child was sought, by some as wife, by more as mistress, by many of those who had the run of the *coulisses* ; but she showed partiality

[1] *The English Spy.*

only for Ball Hughes, and when, on the evening of March 8, 1823, Auber's ballet, "Alfred," was given, and no Mercandotti appeared, scandal duly coupled their names. As a matter of fact, however, they had been secretly married, with the consent of Lord Fife and Madame Mercandotti,[1] and had gone to spend their honeymoon at Oatlands, once the seat of the Duke of York, but which had been purchased, after the death of the Duchess of York, for a hundred and eighty thousand pounds, by the bridegroom. The news was soon made public, whereupon Ainsworth made an epigram:

"The fair damsel is gone, and no wonder at all,
That, bred to the dance, she is gone to the Ball."

Mr. and Mrs. Ball Hughes rented a mansion in Greenwich Park, and kept open house; but after a while there were quarrels, which led to a separation, and eventually a divorce. It is not clear, however, on which side was the fault.

In spite of his attitude towards hunting, "Golden Ball" was a manly person, fond of cricket, rackets, tennis, and billiards. He liked amateur theatricals, and studied the part of

[1] Lord William Pitt Lennox states that Ball Hughes and Mademoiselle Mercandotti eloped, were married in Scotland, and on their return their first visit was to Lord Fife.

Richard III. in Shakespeare's play, which was to have been publicly performed at Queen's Theatre, near Tottenham Court Road, but, for one reason or another, the idea was abandoned after the dress rehearsal. Brighton was in those days a favourite resort for fashionable folk, and once when driving there with a friend in a coach-and-four Ball Hughes attracted more attention than he desired. It was a sultry evening in July, and when the travellers reached Brixton they decided to put the postillions inside, and take their places for a while to enjoy the air. At Croydon their progress was impeded by a great crowd, assembled in expectation of Queen Caroline, which, seeing the gold lace caps of the postillions in the carriage, mistook them in the dim light for the royal personages, and cheered vociferously.

In one way and another "Golden Ball" bulked largely in the public eye, but he was chiefly celebrated for his love of gaming. He liked to play whist for five-pound points, with twenty-five pounds on the rubber; but as a concession to the less well-lined purses of his poorer friends, at Greenwich Park, after dinner, he was willing enough to play *vingt-et-un*, loo, or hazard, limiting the stakes to shillings. This was agreeable

enough; but when the time came when ordinary people think of bed, he, who would never retire till two or three o'clock or later, would calmly announce supper, and, that meal disposed of, would carry his guests back to the table.[1]

Ball Hughes would play cards when he could; but when that entertainment was not available, he would back himself for large sums at any kind of sport. The story is told that one morning he and Lord Petersham were found asleep from sheer exhaustion on the floor in a room at Brook Street, after having spent many hours of the night playing battledore and shuttlecock for high stakes; and Raikes went to Oatlands to see a tennis-match between his host and Scrope Davies, on which the betting was very heavy; while on one occasion, when no other diversion was forthcoming, pitch-and-toss was found good enough for "Golden Ball" to win or lose a few hundred pounds.

In the end, of course, Ball Hughes's means were greatly impaired; but, by a happy chance,

[1] "The result was that night was turned into day, and *vice versâ*; and breakfast, instead of being at the usual hour of nine or ten, seldom took place until after mid-day. With the exception of Long-Wellesley, who often dined at ten o'clock at night, at Wanstead, I never knew any one who revelled in late hours so much as the 'Golden Ball.'"—Lennox: *Drafts on My Memory.*

the purchase of Oatlands, which had been thought by his friends certain to be his undoing, proved his salvation—for in later days, when the new railway skirted it, he was able to sell it to speculative builders for a sum sufficient to pay his debts, and yet retain a competence. Before this, however, he had "retired" to France, where he was introduced to Louis Napoleon as the "Wellington *des Joueurs*," and settled down at Enghien in a small house on the lake near Montmorency. "He is no longer 'Golden Ball,'" said Scrope Davies, who visited him at his retreat; "but since the gilt is off, he rolls on much more smoothly than he did." He remained abroad during the rest of his life, and died at St. Germains in 1863.

CHAPTER XXIII

"POODLE"

From an etching by Richard Dighton (1820).

"A FAVOURITE POODLE."

(Hon. Frederick Byng.)

CHAPTER XXIII

"POODLE" [1]

THE Honourable Frederick Byng has come down to posterity as "Poodle," which nickname Henry Reeve states, on the authority of Byng himself, was bestowed upon him early in life by Lady Bath and Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, who used to call him their poodle, on account of his thick, curly head of hair.[2] It was this *sobriquet* that gave an opening for one of Brummell's *mots*, when the latter on horseback passed Byng, seated in a curricle with his French dog by his side: "Ah, Byng," cried the great man, "how do you do?—A family vehicle, I see!" Joseph Jekyll also indulged in a joke, when some one told him that Byng did not like his appointment as equerry and cicerone to the King

[1] Hon. Frederick Byng (died 1871).

[2] A French commentator on London society remarks that Byng was "*nommé à cause de sa fidélité, Poodle!*"

and Queen of the Sandwich Islands when they were on a visit to this country, as he understood the Sandwich Islanders ate dog. "I think," said Jekyll, "they should be afraid of poodles, for they eat sandwiches."

"Poodle" was the subject of many stories, and most of them centred round his appointment by Canning to look after the amusements and comforts of the Sandwich majesties. George IV. entertained these strange royalties at Windsor, and was so much interested in them that he gave orders that Byng should make daily reports to Canning—whereby hangs an amusing tale.

One morning Byng entered the Minister's room shaking his head sadly.

"Has anything unfortunate occurred?" inquired the Foreign Secretary.

"Nothing, sir, exceedingly unfortunate, but something rather disagreeable."

"Neither of them dead, I hope."

"No, sir," said the equerry despondently.

"What makes you look so serious, then?"

"Why, sir, you must not be surprised at what I am going to say. I have for some time observed a change in their Majesties' condition, brought on, as I suspect, by their change of diet. The

change first showed itself in miliary eruption; it then assumed a more inveterate form of cutaneous derangement: in short, sir, I am compelled to state to you that both the King and Queen have got the——"

"What?"

"The itch!"

Canning with an effort controlled his features, and when he could trust himself to speak, with affected concern inquired, remembering the *sobriquet* of his informant: "Are you sure it is not the mange?"

"Poodle" did not turn a hair, nor even look as if he saw the joke, but said merely, "And in that case, sir?"

"In that case," continued his tormentor, "why, your own experience will, of course, suggest to you the most efficient remedy."

People were never tired of chaffing Byng about his charges; and when they sickened of the measles and died, Jekyll spread the report, "'Poodle' gave them the measles of which they died, and, I believe, as 'Poodle' is poor, Government gave him leave to take what he could find in their royal pockets." But even this topic came to an end, and it made its final bow in Jekyll's diary on July 17, 1824: "We dined at A. Ellis's last

week with 'the Poodle,' who has buried his measled Majesties." [1]

Byng, who was in the Foreign Office for some years, seems to have picked up a good deal of miscellaneous information, which he imparted, as a witty lady put it, "in the style of a word to the wise": thus, he would assure all and sundry that tea should be bought at the India House in chests; how French silks stain and English do not; and other trifles of next to no importance. He had the distinction to rouse the ire of Harriet, Lady Granville, who wrote in January 1822 that she and Lady Morley "are both disgusted with the 'Poodle.' Never was there such a hard, selfish, ill-tempered, presumptuous animal. I have promised Govero never again to abuse anybody who has a single good quality, which reduces me to lay it on thick when I find such a fair two-legged piece of game as this." However, the Ambassadress's anger did not last long, for within a couple of years she was writing of him in friendly strains.

Perhaps Byng grew more tolerable as time passed, for in 1834, when he was in Paris, Lady

[1] Theodore Hook, asked to note their death in *John Bull*, did so in a couplet:

> "'Waiter, two Sandwiches,' cried Death;
> And their wild Majesties resigned their breath."

Granville found that he amused and interested her about politics, "putting many dots upon many i's." One of the last glimpses of him is to be found in Creevey, who wrote on September 30, 1836: "I dined at 'Poodle' Byng's on Monday —the Honble. Mrs. Byng having been lady's maid to the 'Poodle's' mother. You know I have the greatest aversion to playing at company with such kind of tits; but as Charles Greville, Cullen Smith, and Luttrell, and two or three more of your men upon town took no objection, it was not for me to find fault." Modest, humble Creevey!

Byng's career began when he appeared as Page of Honour at the marriage of the Prince of Wales in 1796, and closed shortly after the marriage of another Prince of Wales in 1863, at which latter function he officiated as Gentleman Usher.

CHAPTER XXIV

"RED HERRINGS"

From an etching by Richard Dighton (1818).

A VIEW OF YARMOUTH.

(Lord Yarmouth.)

CHAPTER XXIV

"RED HERRINGS" [1]

HERTFORD

LORD YARMOUTH has achieved undesirable immortality as the prototype of Disraeli's Lord Monmouth in "Coningsby," in which novel he is described as "in height above the middle size, but somewhat portly and corpulent. His countenance was strongly marked; sagacity on the brow, sensuality on the mouth and jaw. His large deep blue eye, madid and yet piercing, showed that the secretions of his brain were apportioned, half to voluptuousness, half to common-sense. But his general mien was truly grand; full of a natural nobility, of which no

[1] Francis Charles Seymour-Conway, Lord Yarmouth; afterwards third Marquis of Hertford; 1777–1842.

one was more sensible."[1] It is also popularly supposed that the same peer sat for Thackeray's Lord Steyne in "Vanity Fair," but it must be confessed that this is not so clear, and that he may, perhaps, contest that invidious distinction with his father.[2] It is true that Mr. George Somes Layard, in an interesting paper on the subject, states that "no one who has taken the trouble to identify the lives of the three Marquises of Hertford [the second, third, and fourth] can hesitate for a moment in identifying the 'Marquis of Steyne' with the third Marquis of Hertford;"[3] but the reasons given by this writer, though accurate so far as they go, are not absolutely conclusive, as an examination of "Vanity Fair" will show.

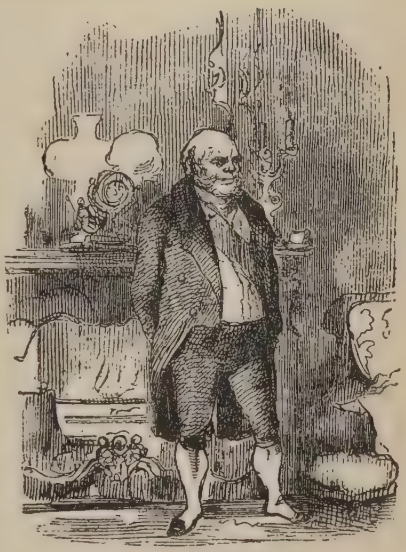
To begin with, the date at which Lord Steyne is introduced into the novel is about four years after Waterloo, when Lord Yarmouth was forty-one and his father seventy-six: wherefore it may be suggested the following description is more likely to apply to the latter than the former: "... Lord Steyne's shining bald head, which

[1] *Coningsby*, chap. iii.

[2] Francis (Ingram) Seymour, second Marquis of Hertford (1743–1822).

[3] "Suppressed Plates: The Marquis of Steyne" (*Pall Mall Magazine*, 1898).

was fringed with red hair. He had thick bushy eyebrows, with little twinkling bloodshot eyes, surrounded by a thousand wrinkles. His jaw was underhung, and when he laughed, two white buck-teeth protruded themselves, and glistened savagely in the midst of the grin. He had been dining with royal personages, and wore his garter and ribbon." [1]



LORD STEYNE
Thackeray's caricature of the Marquis of Hertford

What was the colour of the second Marquis of Hertford's hair has not been recorded, but it is beyond question that his son's was red, since it was this that suggested his nickname: [2] on the other hand, at this time Lord Yarmouth had not been given the Garter, nor, of course, had he entered into possession of Gaunt House, the family

[1] *Vanity Fair*, chap. xxxvii.

[2] Lord Yarmouth, almost as a matter of course, was also called "Bloaters."

mansion. Thackeray, *à propos* of a side door to Gaunt House, tells us further, on the authority of Tom Eaves, that "The Prince and Perdita have been in and out of that door, sir; Marianne Clarke has entered it with the [Duke of York]. It conducts to the famous *petits appartements* of Lord Steyne—one, sir, fitted up all in ivory and white satin, another in ebony and black velvet; there is a little banqueting-room taken from Sallust's house at Pompeii, and painted by Cosway—a little private kitchen, in which every saucepan was silver, and all the spits were gold. It was there that Egalité Orleans roasted partridges on the night when he and the Marquis of Steyne won a hundred thousand from a great personage at hombre."[1] Now, the Prince of Wales broke off his connection with "Perdita," that is, Mary Anne Robinson, in 1781; and Egalité was executed in 1793, when Lord Yarmouth was sixteen years of age. Then, too, Lady Steyne, "the haughtiest woman in England," resembles Lady Hertford rather than Lady Yarmouth. Again, we are told that Lord Steyne was "First Lord of the Powder Closet and Groom of the Back-stairs,"[2] whereas until the year before his death the second Marquis

[1] *Vanity Fair*, chap. xlvii.
[2] *Ibid.*, chap. lxiv.

was Lord Chamberlain of the Household, and his son never held higher office at Court than Vice-Chamberlain to the Prince Regent.

The moral character of the second Marquis was on a par with that of Lord Steyne. He was a notorious *roué*, the "Hoary Old Sinner" of Tom Moore, who introduces him in "The Two-Penny Post-Bag," in the letter supposed to be written by the Prince Regent to Lord Yarmouth, the day after dining at Manchester House:

"Our next round of toasts was a fancy quite new,
For we drank—and you'll own it was benevolent, too—
To those well-meaning husbands, cits, parsons or peers,
Whom we've any time honoured by kissing their dears:
This museum of wittols was comical rather,
Old Hertford gave Massey, and *I* gave your father!"

Is it not possible that the second Marquis's seduction of Mrs. Massey, which excited society at the time, may have suggested to Thackeray the famous Becky Sharp and Lord Steyne episode?

It was at Rome that Lord Steyne appears in "Vanity Fair" for the last time, driving by the side of Madame de Belladonna, "with a livid face, and ghastly eyes. Hate, or anger, or desire, caused them to brighten now and then still; but ordinarily he gave no light, and seemed tired of looking out on a world, of which almost

all the pleasure and all the best beauty had palled upon the worn-out wicked old man."[1] When it is remembered that the death of Lord Steyne occurs, so far as can be gathered from the story, in the early twenties, and it is remembered that the second Marquis of Hertford died in 1822, and that his son lived for another score of years, it is clear that those who contend that the second Marquis was the prototype of Lord Steyne have at least a right to demand consideration for their theory.

On the other hand, it must not be forgotten that Thackeray was writing a novel, and he may have felt himself perfectly justified in juggling with dates to suit the exigencies of the story. Desiring to introduce "the richly dressed figure of the Wicked Nobleman, on which no expense has been spared, and which Old Nick will fetch away at the end,"[2] what more likely that when he conjured up a profligate peer, having heard stories of the Marquises of Hertford, he should tack these on to his creation; or that, with these stories in his mind, he should draw a purely fancy portrait of a Lord Hertford, since there was no reason why—for, unlike Disraeli with "Coningsby,"

[1] *Vanity Fair*, Chap. lxiv.
[2] *Ibid.*, *Before the Curtain.*

he was not writing a *roman-à-clef*—he should trouble to study the character or the career of the nobleman in question?

If the second Marquis did not resent the Prince of Wales's attentions to his wife, it is at least so much in his successor's favour that he would not permit that royal personage to pay his addresses to Lady Yarmouth.[1] With this exception, however, it must be conceded that there was little in the matter of morals to choose between father and son. John Mills describes the latter as "a man without one redeeming quality in the multitude of his glaring, damning vices,"[2] and as "the debauched sensualist, the heartless *roué*, the gamester—he who never evinced a latent spark of virtue among his glaring vices, revelling in crime even in his impotent old age and dotage";[3] while he gives point to his attack by describing "the closing scene in the life of the greatest debauchee the world has ever seen"—a picture of sensuality that may not here be reprinted.[4]

Lord Yarmouth married in 1792 Maria Fagniana, of whom it has been happily said that "never before did a lady have so many fathers, or

[1] See vol. i. p. 4.
[2] *D'Horsay; or, The Follies of the Day*, chap. vi.
[3] *Ibid.*, chap. xiv.
[4] *Ibid.*

derive so much profit from them." Besides her legal father, the Marquis Fagniana, George Selwyn and "Old Q." each believed himself solely entitled to the distinction of having assisted to bring her into the world; and by their wills they showed how much they valued the privilege. Selwyn left her thirty thousand pounds, and, perhaps as a concession, made the Duke of Queensberry residuary legatee; while the Duke, in due course, provided her with one hundred and fifty thousand pounds and three houses, appointing her husband residuary legatee. What the Marquis left her has not been made known. She bore her husband three children; but left him after some years of married life, and placed herself under the protection of Marshal Androche. When this separation took place is not very clear. The authors of "George Selwyn: his Life, his Friends, and his Age," give the date as 1802; but this is obviously inaccurate, for we find in the "Jeningham Letters" references to husband and wife in 1803: *Lord and Lady Yarmouth sont encore ici [à Paris] quoique 'old quiz' soit mourant à Londres*";[1] and again, "*Lord Elgin, qui passoit ici en revenant de son ambassade, se trouve arrêté comme les autres, ainsi que Lord Yarmouth qui est revenu*

[1] Vol. i. p. 225.

d'Angleterre depuis trois jours, pour venir chercher sa cara sposa." [1] Indeed, Lord and Lady Yarmouth were together at Paris two years later, when their son, Lord Henry Seymour, was born.

That his wife should have left him is not surprising, for Lord Yarmouth did not allow the marriage tie to bind him in any way; and his attachment to Fanny, the sister of the more notorious Harriette, Wilson was but one of innumerable *affaires*.[2] He studied nothing but his own desires, we are told; he lived the life of a voluptuary, and was satisfied with it. Indeed, he devoted himself so persistently to the pursuit of licentious enjoyment, that there is every reason to believe he was worn out by his excesses, and that towards the end of his life he was not sane: "the brain of the late Marquis of Hertford was a diseased brain, and had long been so," the doctor who attended him during his last illness informed John Wilson Croker; "the partial paralysis, speechlessness, and other long-standing direct cerebral symptoms demonstrate it." In his old age, in the pursuit of debauchery, he fell into the hands of parasites, who robbed him right and left, and persuaded him to mention them

[1] Vol. i. p. 227.

[2] *Memoirs of Harriette Wilson.* Written by Herself.

in his will, which was at last a most wonderful document, containing numberless codicils.

Lord Yarmouth, in spite of his red whiskers, hair, and face, was a noted dandy, and for some time was the Regent's chief adviser in matters sartorial; but he had qualities that raised him above the level of the ordinary *beau* or voluptuary. "Lord Yarmouth is awaiting with indecent impatience the death of his father, but it should be said in his defence that the poor old man has become quite foolish," Princess Lieven wrote in March 1822; and six months later she informed her correspondent: "Lord Yarmouth is at last become Marquis of Hertford; his father is dead, leaving him a clear annual rent-roll of one hundred and sixty thousand pounds. His idea is to devote the greater part of it to buying votes in Parliament, in order to make himself a power with which the Crown must count. He has quarrelled with the King."[1]

The Princess seems to have been misinformed, for Croker, who was in a position to know, stated that the new Marquis came in for just half the amount, eighty thousand a year, and he thought that, "with his houses and gardens and preserves, his wife, and his sons, and his

[1] *Letters of Dorothea, Princess Lieven*, 1812–34.

daughter, and all other claims upon him," it was doubtful if he would be a richer man than he was, and, he added, "I am sure not so happy a one." Yet, even without this additional income, the Marquis was rich enough to return many members of Parliament; and, as it is known, it was his pleasure to do so. A well-read man, and a patron of art, he took an active and intelligent interest in politics; but he did not permit this in any way to interfere with his pleasures, and as he spent much time abroad and could never be induced to read newspapers, he had to find some one to take charge of his interests in England. Little by little he came to place reliance upon Croker, who kept him abreast of the tidings of the day, and exercised a kind of practical supervision over the property. As for this Croker would accept no salary, it was generally expected that Lord Hertford would leave him a very substantial sum: so much so, that after the death of the Marquis Sir Robert Peel wrote to Croker: "My chief interest in respect to Lord Hertford's will was the hope that out of his enormous wealth he would mark his sense of your unvarying and real friendship for him." As a matter of fact, under the will Croker benefited to the extent of twenty-one thousand pounds.

CHAPTER XXV

"NOGROW" AND "LORD PRIMA DONNA."

From an engraving by J. C. Armytage after a miniature.

CAPTAIN GRONOW.

CHAPTER XXV

"NOGROW"[1] AND "LORD PRIMA DONNA."[2]

REES HOWELL GRONOW, whom Creevey referred to as "the member of Parliament and the duellist," was, as a member of society, of far more importance in his own, than in anybody else's, eyes. Born in 1794, and educated at Eton, where he was intimate with Shelley, at the age of eighteen he became an ensign in the first regiment of Foot-Guards, and early in 1813 he went on active service to Spain. In the following year he returned with his battalion to England, and at once set up as a dandy. Fortunate in securing the *entrée* to Almack's at a time when, as he has related, only a few of the three hundred officers in the Guards obtained that privilege, he was one of the first to dance the quadrille and the waltz in this country.

[1] Rees Howell Gronow, 1794–1865.
[2] Lord William Pitt Lennox, 1799–1881.

A soldier to the backbone, so soon as he heard of Napoleon's escape from Elba, he determined, without waiting to secure the permission of the military authorities, to join the English army in Brussels. The sole obstacle was that he had no ready money, but this he would not allow to interfere with his project. He borrowed all he could—two hundred pounds—from his agents, Messrs. Cox & Greenwood; and this sum being insufficient for his needs, he determined to treble it or lose it. He repaired to a St. James's Square gambling-den, and won six hundred pounds! Hastily purchasing horses and other requisites, he crossed the Channel, persuaded General Picton to take him on his staff, and was in time to be present at Quatre Bras and Waterloo, and to enter Paris with the allied troops. Three days later he was promoted to a captaincy in his regiment, with which he remained for six years, when he retired from the army. Bankrupt in 1823, he was in a position to contest Grimsby at the election of 1831—probably owing to the fortune he inherited from his father, William Gronow, of Court Herbert, Glamorganshire. His experiences in this direction were unfortunate: he was elected for Stafford in the first Reformed Parliament, but unseated for bribery; and

standing again, three years later, was defeated by Mr. F. L. Holyoake Goodriche. In later years he resided in Paris. He married in 1825 Antoinine Didier, of the Opera, and, after her death, Mdlle. de Saint-Pol, by whom he had four children.

The time of Gronow's greatest glory was, perhaps after Waterloo and until his departure for Paris, where he was present during the *coup d'état*. For some years he occupied the house where Brummell had resided until 1810, No. 4, Chesterfield Street, Mayfair, and he moved in the best society, accepted as a dandy, not only by Brummell, but also by Lord Alvanley. Always well-dressed, of course, his popularity among women may perhaps be accounted for by his exceptional good looks. According to one account, however, Count D'Orsay thought little of him, and made fun of him on account of his small stature. Although a magnificent pistol-shot—the best in England, it was said, with the exception of Captain Ross—Gronow was a good-natured man, and he showed no resentment when D'Orsay, inverting two letters of his patronymic, called him No-grow, in overt allusion to his size; nor when, after admiring one of the Count's waistcoats, and saying, "Oh, my dear Count, you really must

give me that wonderful waistcoat," the tall French dandy replied, "Wiz pleesure, 'Nogrow,' but w'at s'all you do wiz 'im?" and then added, with a smile, "Ah! 'e s'all make you one dressing-gown!"[1]

"I have lived long enough to have lost all my dearest and best friends," Gronow lamented some years before his death, which took place at Paris on November 20, 1865. "The great laws of humanity have left me on a high-and-dry elevation, from which I am doomed to look over a sort of Necropolis, whence it is my delight to call forth certain choice spirits of the past." His method of calling forth these choice spirits was to write his reminiscences[2] which are concerned with English and French society, and are very valuable, although now and then a story may have been told at second-hand, as showing the dandies of the day in their habit as they lived.

[1] Mrs. Pitt-Byrnne: *Gossip of the Century*, vol. i. p. 117.

[2] *Reminiscences of Captain Gronow, formerly of the Grenadier Guards, and M.P. for Stafford; being Anecdotes of the Camp, the Court, and the Clubs, at the close of the last war with France.* Related by Himself, 1861.

Recollections and Anecdotes; being a Second Series of Reminiscences. By Captain R. H. Gronow. 1863.

Celebrities of London and Paris; being a Third Series of Reminiscences and Anecdotes. By Captain R. H. Gronow. 1865.

Captain Gronow's Last Recollections; being the Fourth and Fifth Series of his Reminiscences and Anecdotes. 1866.

Another writer of reminiscences was Lord William Pitt Lennox, but his works are nowadays seldom read, possibly because he filled so many volumes with his recollections, and was so careless that again and again he repeated himself. Yet his biographical works, notwithstanding these blemishes, are valuable to the student interested in social personages who lived under the Regency, for Lord William, born in the purple, knew every one and went everywhere. A younger son of Charles Lennox, fourth Duke of Richmond,[1] a god-son of Pitt, and a cousin of Charles James Fox, he was educated at Westminster under Dr. Cary from 1808 to 1814. Before he left school he was gazetted to a cornetcy in the Royal Horse Guards (Blue), and in August 1814 he accompanied the Duke of Wellington as an *attaché* in his embassy to Paris. During the Hundred Days he served on the staff of General Sir Peregrine Maitland, and was, of course, present at his mother's historic ball on the eve of Waterloo. He accompanied the Duke of Wellington as *aide-de-camp* to the battlefield and subsequently to the Congress of Vienna; and on the proclamation of peace served his father in the same

[1] His mother was Lady Charlotte Gordon, eldest daughter of Alexander, fourth Duke of Gordon.

capacity, when the latter was Governor-General of Canada. A Page of Honour at the coronation of George IV., he was promoted captain in the following year, and remained in the army until 1829, when he retired by the sale of his commission.

At an early age he had been admitted a member of White's Club, but while this gave him great pleasure and secured him the *entrée* to the society of the dandies, there was the drawback, as he tells us, that being "only a subaltern officer in the Blues, with no means of being an exquisite in dress, or of turning out a neat equipage, . . . I was not much courted by that set. When the dynasty was at an end I came much oftener in contact with many of its leaders."[1] Owing to his lack of means, he was tersely described by a contemporary as "an issuer of paper money discounted at high rates"; and it is scarcely necessary to add, therefore, that he was acquainted with the money-lending confraternity. "Jew" King was one of the latter, and when Lord William was thrown off his horse in Hyde Park, the usurer, who chanced to be driving by, took him into his carriage: when this was mentioned at White's, "A Bill," com-

[1] *Drafts on My Memory*, vol. i. p. 179.

mented Brummell, "Jewly (duly) taken up and honoured!"

After his retirement from the army, Lord William interested himself in politics, and for a while represented King's Lynn in Parliament; but he was not happy in this *milieu*, and soon abandoned himself to the life of a man about town. He became very popular in theatrical and operatic circles, as is hinted in the name under which he figures in "Coningsby," Lord Prima Donna; and he also had a large acquaintance among writers, being especially intimate with Theodore Hook, at one of whose dinners he made a pun as terrible as anything ever perpetrated by his host. At the time of Sir Robert Peel's famous change of front in the matter of the Corn Laws, Hook had put black crape over the minister's picture, which hung in the dining-room; and Horace Twiss, then an Under-Secretary of State, thought it incumbent upon him to remove it, but, noticing that there was some difficulty in so doing, Lord William said, with a pretty affectation of sadness: "Ah! it's of no use; you will never be able to get him out of his s-*crape*!"

For years he devoted himself to fashion and sport, but when his purse seriously needed replen-

ishing, he turned to his pen for support. He became a most prolific author, contributing to the Annuals, to *Once a Week*, the *Court Journal*, and the *Review* newspaper, of which latter he was for some time editor, and wrote many novels of military and sporting life, which had an ephemeral success. He survived until 1881, having outlived all his contemporaries.

CHAPTER XXVI

ALVANLEY

CHAPTER XXVI

ALVANLEY [1]

WILLIAM, second Baron Alvanley, was the son of Richard Pepper Arden, the eminent lawyer and politician, who was raised to the peerage in 1801. The latter was a man of such violent manner that when a Frenchman, visiting the Law Courts, asked who was the irascible advocate, and his companion translated the name, "*Le Chevalier Poivre Ardent*," "*Parbleu*," rejoined the other, "*il est très bien nommé.*" Pepper Arden was scarcely a popular man, and most of the satirists of the day had something to say of him.

"Some dreadful works of seeming *drunken* Nature,
As for example, let us now suppose
Thurlow's black Scowl, and Pepper Arden's Nose"

[1] William, second Baron Alvanley, 1789–1849.
Farewell Odes to the Royal Academicians.

unkindly wrote "Peter Pindar," who cherished a grudge against Arden because the lawyer, in his official capacity of Attorney-General, had warned the satirist that even lampooners might presume too far upon a sovereign's magnanimity.

"Hark! with astonishment a sound I hear,
That strikes tremendous on my ear:
It says, great Arden, commonly called Pepper,
Of mighty George's Thunderbolts the Keeper,
Just like of Jupiter the famous Eagle,
Is ordered out to hunt me like a Beagle." [1]

While "Peter Pindar" attacked Pepper Arden's appearance, "Anthony Pasquin" took for his subject the lawyer's alleged incapacity, and wrote a brief conversation between the Lord Chancellor and the younger Pitt, on the occasion of the appointment of Pepper Arden to the great law office of Master of the Rolls.

"Lord Chancellor:
'Is it true you've fixed Arden in Lloyd Kenyon's chair?
Zounds, the law wants a man with a head;'
Pitt:
'That's the reason I gave my friend Pepper the rolls,
As the courts could scarce furnish him bread.'"

[1] "Peter Pindar": *Ode upon Ode.*

Even good-tempered Joseph Jekyll began a once-popular parody of the National Anthem with

"From Pepper Arden's law,

. . . . .

God save the King!"

A very different man was the second Lord Alvanley, born on February 10, 1789.[1] If few spoke well of the father, nobody had an ill word for the son. There was not a more popular man in society, handsome, witty, kindly, *debonair*. He began life in the Coldstream Guards, of which the Duke of York was Colonel, and he served at Copenhagen and in the Peninsula. He had reached the grade of lieutenant-colonel when he resigned his commission; and, once embarked in private life, he set to work to dissipate his immense patrimony with a zeal and intelligence that, put to a more serviceable end, would have

[1] "In appearance he was about the middle height, and well and strongly built, though he latterly became somewhat corpulent. He excelled in all manly exercises, was a hard rider to hounds, and was what those who do not belong to the upper ten thousand call 'a good plucked one.' His face had somewhat of the rotund form and smiling expression which characterise the jolly friars one meets with in Italy. His hair and eyes were dark, and he had a very small nose, to which, after deep potations, his copious pinches of snuff had some difficulty in finding their way, and were in consequence rather lavishly bestowed upon his florid cheek."—Gronow: *Reminiscences.*

brought him fame and fortune. He squandered money in all directions, and was an easy victim to the attractions of the gaming-table. Even after he had lost a fortune, he could not entirely withdraw himself from the fascination of the cards. "Lord A——y, the babe of honour—once the gayest of the gay, where Fashion holds her bright, enchanting court, now wrinkled and dressed, and plucked of every feather by merciless *banditti*," wrote Westmacott of him in 1825. "Such is the infatuation of play, that he still continues to linger round the fatal table, and finds a pleasure in recounting his enormous losses." [1]

"A——y mark, a battered *beau*,
Who'll still the fatal dice-box throw
Till not a guinea 's left." [2]

Lord Alvanley's recorded bets, however, though original in character, were usually very moderate in amount.

Lord Alvanley bets Sir Joseph Copley five guineas that a certain Baronet understood between them is very much embarrassed in his circumstances in three years from the date hereof: if one of his bills is dishonoured, or he is observed to borrow small change of the chairman and waiters, Sir Joseph is to be reckoned to lose.—February 14, 1813. [No statement as to winner.]

[1] *The English Spy.* [2] *Ibid.*

Lord Alvanley bets Mr. [G.] Talbot hundred guineas to ten guineas that a certain person understood between them does not marry a lady understood between them in eighteen months from this day.—January 5, 1811. [Talbot paid.]

Lord Alvanley bets Sir Joseph Copley twenty guineas that a certain person outlives another certain person. —January 11, 1811.

Lord Alvanley bets Mr. [F. G.] Goddard five guineas that Mr. G. Talbot does not die a natural death. N.B. Tinct. Canth., a drawn bet.

The Lord Alvanley bets the Duke of R. £10 that Mrs. H. B. has a child before Mrs. A. G.—April 6, 1823. [Alvanley duplicated the bet with Charles Greville, and lost.]

Lord Alvanley bets Mr. [Spencer H. K.] Kilberbee £10 that a certain person under certain circumstances does go to a certain place in a certain time.

Alvanley was a noted *bon vivant*, and he squandered great sums of money in the pleasures of the table. He indulged in the costly fad of having an apricot tart served at dinner every day throughout the year; on one occasion he charged himself with the provision of lunch for a boating party, which had been forgotten until the last moment, and he paid Gunter two hundred pounds for the hamper; and he organised a wonderful "freak" dinner at White's Club. "It was agreed that whoever could produce the most

expensive dish should dine for nothing. The winner was Lord Alvanley, whose dish was a *fricassée* composed entirely of the *noix* or small pieces at each side of the back taken from thirteen different kinds of birds, among them being a hundred snipe, forty woodcocks, twenty pheasants, etc., in all about three hundred birds. The cost, including garniture, amounted to £108 5*s*." [1]

It was said, and probably with truth, that his dinners were the best in England; while the expenses of his table may easily be deduced from the following story:

"How long do you stay here?" a friend asked him at Brighton.

"Five-and-thirty pounds," was the unexpected reply.

"Five-and-thirty pounds!" echoed the other in surprise.

"What I mean by five-and-thirty pounds," explained the peer, "is that, after allowing ten for posting from London here and back, I have a 'pony' to spend here, and as long as that lasts

[1] Bourke: *History of White's Club.*

Abraham Hayward in his *Art of Dining* gives an account of another gastronomic extravagance of Lord Alvanley. "He had his *suprême de volaille* made of the oysters, or *les sots, les-laissent*, of fowls, instead of the fillet from the breast, so that it took a score of birds to complete a moderate dish."

I shall remain. I think two more dinners and breakfasts at the York Hotel will clear me out."

Lord Alvanley probably spent money the more freely because he never paid cash for anything; and it was he who said of a rich friend who had become poor, that he had "muddled away his fortune in paying tradesmen's bills!" Asked what he had given for his horse, "Nothing," he said naïvely: "I owe Math Milton two hundred guineas for him." This, however, was the least of his eccentricities: his worst habit was that he read in bed and never blew out his candle. Nothing would induce him to put out the light in the ordinary way. Sometimes he put the burning candle under his pillow and leant upon it until the flame was extinguished; but his usual method was to fling the candle into the middle of the room, when, if it did not go out in its passage through the air, he would throw a pillow at it. At those houses where his company was regarded as more than the equivalent of the risk of fire, a servant was stationed outside his room, with strict instructions to break open the door at the first smell of burning.

Even Alvanley's fortune could not stand the strain put upon it, and soon the possessor of it was writing to a friend whom he was inviting to

dinner: "I have no credit with either butcher or poulterer, but, if you can put up with turtle and turbot, I shall be happy to see you." But after a time, presumably, even the purveyor of turtle and the fishmonger stopped supplies, for Alvanley decided to put his affairs in order, and for that purpose begged the aid of Charles Greville.[1] The "Gruncher" undertook to assist, and the two men devoted many hours to the examination of bills and papers, only to find that the peer was not so greatly embarrassed after all. Mutual congratulations followed—when Alvanley suddenly remembered a debt of fifty thousand pounds! The man who could forget such an item surely had something of the heroic in him.

He strove to emulate his friend Brummell in the matter of dress, and was accepted, with Sir Henry Mildmay and Henry Pierrepoint, as an arbiter of fashion; but never reached the pinnacle upon which had stood that worthy, of whom he said, "Brummell is the only *Dande*lion that flourished year after year in the hotbed of

[1] Lady Salisbury, getting up *tableaux vivants* at Hatfield, in which all the persons present were to appear as characters in *Ivanhoe*, and, finding no one had selected Isaac of York, she asked Lord Alvanley to do the Jew. "Anything within my power you may command," he replied; "but, though no man in England has tried oftener, I never could *do a Jew* in my life!"

the fashionable world: he had taken root." Alvanley, however, attracted some attention by his efforts to appear as a *beau*, but it is doubtful if he was pleased when he found himself described in a *brochure* that had a wide circulation:

" First, the Exquisite deals in each modish excess,
Is the cream of conceit, and a slave to his dress.
His huge cravat so tight half deprives him of breath,
Whilst his staymaker squeezes his stomach to death;
And his tailor, who well, by his work, may be known,
And who lit'rally lives on the *skirts* of the town,
Has so docked him behind that the mode may prevail,
That he looks like a gander half shorn of his tail.
In this portrait an Alv-n-y's likeness behold,
And a G-l-b-n, whose spur boasts a rowel of gold." [1]

It is not as an exquisite, however, that Alvanley has come down to posterity, but as a wit. "I remember well in the days of posting, Alvanley giving me a lift in his well-appointed travelling chariot from Brighton to London, and I never had a more agreeable journey," Lord William Pitt Lennox paid tribute to his friend. "From the time we left the York Hotel, until we reached Hyde Park Corner, he never ceased to entertain me with club anecdotes or fashionable gossip, so full of wit, so epigrammatic, that I only wish I

[1] *Fashion: Dedicated to all the Town.*

could remember a tenth part of the good things he said. There was a good humour about Alvanley that was thoroughly delightful; he saw everything in a humorous light, and he communicated his impressions with such point and merriment that he threw many of the would-be wits of the day completely in the shade. At repartee he was quick as lightning, and in a keen encounter of wit, with even the most formidable opponent, he ever came off with credit to himself, and generally to the discomfort of his antagonist." [1]

Alvanley's wit and readiness were indeed beyond all question. The best-known example of his humour was his joking reply when Robert Gunter, the famous caterer's son, was riding a very high-mettled horse and bumped up against Alvanley. "I can't hold him, he's so hot," came the apology. "Ice him, Gunter, ice him," was the rejoinder—not in the best taste, perhaps.

However, Gunter had shown himself quite capable of taking his own part. When he joined the First Dragoon Guards he had been subjected to a great deal of chaff, not all of it good-natured, for tradesmen's sons were not encouraged to join crack cavalry regiments.

[1] *Drafts on my Memory.*

"Your father was a confectioner, was he not?" a brother officer asked the newly joined cornet.

The answer was, of course, "Yes."

"I wonder he did not make you a good confectioner also," continued the other, beginning to move away.

Gunter, however, was prepared with a retort, and inquired in a courteous tone:

"Your father was a gentleman, was he not?"

"Yes, he was," said the youngster's tormentor, falling into the trap.

"Then," said Gunter, reflectively, "I wonder he did not make you a gentleman also!"

Disconcerting was Alvanley's remark, made in the mildest of tones, to an irascible country gentleman, who, though an indifferent whist-player, thought highly of his abilities in this direction: "You are considered to play a good game, I suppose—at Bletchley?"

Amusing, too, was his recipe, recorded by Joseph Jekyll, to make a London house as entertaining as a house in the country. "You have only to invite a parson of the parish to dine with you on Sunday, and to order your servants to bring you no newspapers or letters on Monday."

When the Tory administration, in which Lord

Belfast was Vice-Chamberlain, resigned, that noble peer had at his request retained his post under the Whigs. When this Government, in due course, went out of office, Lord Belfast presented himself at court to resign, but before he opened his mouth, King William said, "I know what you are come for." Thereupon Lord Alvanley remarked that it showed great perspicacity on the part of his Majesty, as any one else would have thought he had come to beg permission to stay.

Good was Alvanley's comment on a finely decorated house belonging to an inhospitable acquaintance: "I should like a little less gilding and more carving."

Alvanley and Lord Morpeth were walking through Piccadilly when they met the Duke of Devonshire smoking in that thoroughfare, in a day when it was not "good form" to smoke in the street.

"What, his Grace indulging in a mild Havana!" exclaimed Alvanley.

"Yes," said his companion; "his doctor has recommended it on foggy days."

"All very well, so long as he does not take to what is called the Virginian weed," rejoined the other; "but should he indulge in Cavendish, we shall have to 'Cut Cavendish'!"

Best of all the stories attributed to Alvanley, but unfortunately not too well authenticated, is that which relates to the time when, after the death of Queen Charlotte, the Duke of York was invited to become custodian of his father, and as compensation for accepting the honorary post, asked for a yearly stipend of £10,000. It is said that Alvanley, coming into White's, greeted a party of his friends with, "How are you merry beggars?" to which Lord Foley replied, "Speak for yourself," a retort that raised a laugh because of Alvanley's known embarrassment. The episode reached Oatlands, and the Duchess of York asked Alvanley to tell her the true tale. "Oh, it's nothing, ma'am," he replied, with great audacity. "They talk of forming a new club, and wanted a name for it. I proposed to call it the 'Merry Beggars,' and we hope his Royal Highness will be our President."

The retort of Lord Foley,[1] or "No. 11," as he was called from the shape of his legs, was apt enough, but of all men he should have been the last to chaff another upon extravagance, since he was one of the most notorious of the band of fashionable spendthrifts. Inheriting an estate

[1] Lord of the Bedchamber and Captain of the band of Gentlemen Pensioners to William IV.

worth forty thousand pounds a year, he squandered every penny he could lay hands upon, and persuaded his eldest son to make himself answerable for his father's debts. "Was there ever such wickedness?" Creevey asks sorrowfully, as he states at the time of Lord Foley's death in 1833 that the family "have been literally without bread of late." This need not be taken literally, for he mentions that the widow had a jointure of two thousand a year, and the seven younger children have for equal division among themselves thirty thousand pounds; but the son and heir was in a parlous state until he sold Witley to Lord Ward for eight hundred and ninety thousand pounds, when, according to Lady Louisa Molyneux, he had "nineteen thousand a year without any debt, instead of the wretched impoverished man he was."[1] Raikes was well acquainted with "No. 11," having lived with him in the closest intimacy for a quarter of a century, and he declared that he "never knew a kinder or more friendly heart than his; that he was of a noble and princely disposition, and that it was the unbounded hospitality of his nature that brought him into pecuniary difficulties.

Unlike most wits, Lord Alvanley never engrossed

[1] *Creevey Papers.*

too much of the conversation, nor unduly taxed the attention of the company by telling long stories: it was his habit rather to touch lightly upon such topics of the day as were introduced by others, than to lead the talk. His kindness of heart passed into a byword, and his charities were done in secret and with great delicacy. In his later days, when money was scarce with him, at Vienna, he learnt of two elderly aristocratic ladies living there in penury, and forthwith he settled a small pension upon these distressed women, whom he had never seen. In smaller matters he was consideration itself, and when Lord Allen came to visit him in the country, the host, knowing that his guest was miserable out of town and could not sleep without the roar of the traffic to which he was accustomed, hired a hackney-coach to drive in front of his window at the inn all night, and arranged that the "boots" should at proper intervals call the time and the weather, like the London watchmen.[1]

Lord Alvanley, in spite of his prowess as a dandy and *bon vivant*, did not allow these accomplishments to occupy his life, and, indeed, he had a serious side to his character. "He had lived

[1] Bourke: *History of White's.*

in nearly every court in Europe, had a vast acquaintance with the world, and his knowledge of languages was great," Gronow has recorded; and his correspondence with Raikes shows a considerable interest in home politics and French affairs. It was in connection with a political statement in 1835, that O'Connell referred to him in the House of Commons as a "bloated buffoon." Duelling, though on the decline, was still in vogue, and Alvanley at once sent a challenge, which the Liberator declined, on the ground that after the meeting twenty years earlier in which he had killed Mr. D'Esterre he had taken a vow never to go out again. Alvanley, who might have overlooked the "buffoon," could not forgive the allusion to his corpulence, and sent word he would thrash the aggressor, whereupon Morgan O'Connell offered himself in his father's place. It is told that, as Alvanley drove in silence to the ground with his second, Dawson Damer, who had the distinction of being the best-dressed man at White's, the latter thought to himself, "Well, I see Alvanley is for once made serious," and broke the silence by addressing his principal:

"Let what will come of it, Alvanley, the world is extremely indebted to you for calling out this fellow as you have done."

"The world indebted to me, my dear fellow!" exclaimed the other. "I am devilish glad to hear it, for then the world and I are quits."

On the ground appeared unexpectedly a Methodist parson, who came to beg the combatants to "forego their sinful purpose." His appeal to O'Connell meeting with no success, he walked across to Lord Alvanley.

"Pray, sir, go and mind your own affairs," said the latter, "for I have enough to do now to think of mine."

"Think of your soul!" the well-meaning meddler implored.

"Yes," retorted the peer, "but my body is now in the greater danger."

Several shots were exchanged without result. "What a clumsy fellow O'Connell must be to miss such a fat fellow as I!" said Alvanley calmly, alluding to the insult that had provoked the meeting. "He ought to practise at a haystack to get his hand in." Driven back to London, he gave the hackney-coachman a sovereign. "It's a great deal," said the man gratefully, "for having taken your lordship to Wimbledon." "No, my good fellow," the peer laughed; "I give it you, not for taking me, but for bringing me back!"

In his later years Alvanley travelled a great

deal, and those who will may find some record of his impressions in his correspondence with Raikes. He was, we are told by Gronow, an excellent classical scholar, a good speaker, and whatever he undertook he succeeded in; but, while we may accept the judgment of this chronicler, it may be remembered that his ambitions were not very great. However, besides his interest in political affairs and the fashionable world, he at one time of his life cherished literary ambition, and the best example of his skill in this direction is to be met with in the Epilogue which he contributed to Lord Glengall's comedy "The Follies of Fashion," and which was spoken by Miss Mordaunt:

"All is prepared, and four of Newman's greys,
A *pair*, I mean, are waiting with the chaise;
Delays are dangerous, they justly say,
And most to those who start before they pay.
Poor Splashton's creditors, as well as mine,
With noses, as a Spanish pointer's fine,
Wind our retreat, forerunners to a score—
See crowds of milliners infest the door!
So off we must—and, too penurious fate!
Crawl with a pair—a married *tête-à-tête*.
His Lordship's gentleman has just given warning,
To go with less than four indignant scorning!
And Mam'selle Rose, still screaming, '*Quel revers*!'
Sobs in the dicky, with a '*mal de nerfs*.'

"Then farewell, Opera! Kensington, adieu!
Almack's, farewell! farewell, écarté, too!
No more triumphant, shall I turn the King,
Or on the crowded board my rouleau fling;
With careless ease, seem happy to be plunder'd.
And own, with graceful nod, the unsettled hundred;
But, genius cramp'd, at sober country play,
Through whist for shillings yawn my weary way;
To draughts or cribbage with the parson fall,
Or teach écarté at the Sessions' ball.

"Methinks I see our friends—a dreadful band—
At White's resume their customary stand;
In that bow-window—Scandal's favourite seat,
The inquisition of St. James's Street,
Where bilious questioners await their prey,
And dawdling idlers kill the tedious day;
Where wit and fool, where *bel esprit* and bore
Together congregate at half-past four—
Ourselves their theme:—So Splashton's gone at last!
I always thought that fellow went too fast.
Who's got his cook? I've bought *her vis-à-vis.*
When did they go? Why, yesterday, at three.
Is *she* gone too? Yes, Lureall's downcast eyes,
Disordered dress and overacted sighs,
Hint the sad tale of interrupted love,
And grief, which nothing but champagne can move.
Thus mentioned, thus forgotten, we depart,
With steps still lingering, and with heavy heart;
Yet, *ere I go*, some last advice is due
To those who knew and shared my follies too.

Wives who, though really spotless as the sun,
Too near the wind are sometimes apt to run—
Know that the tell-tale world is swayed by acts,
And sighs and *billets-doux* will pass for facts.

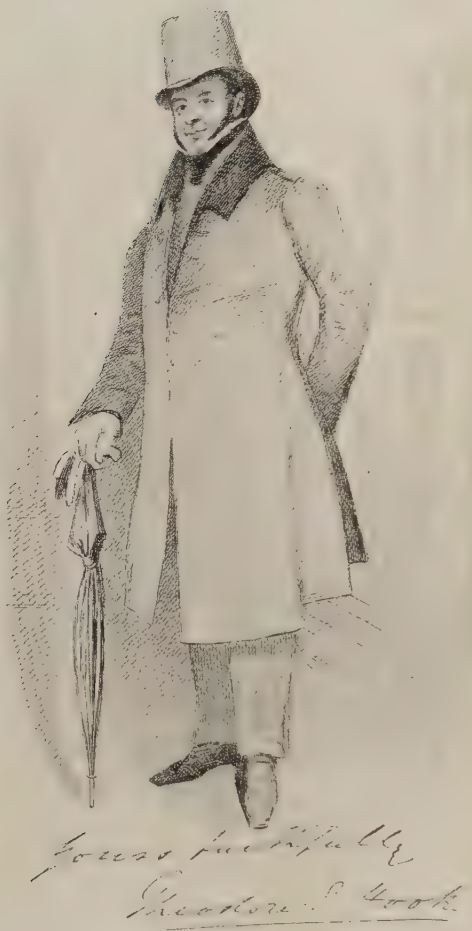
" Husbands, by mine be warned, who, graceless fellows,
Yourselves make love, then venture to be jealous ;
Who basely truckle to that vulgar passion,
And yet affect a wondrous deal of fashion :
Mend, if you can ; if not, come, one and all,
And moralise with *us* at Splashton Hall."

PART IV

THE SOCIETY WITS

CHAPTER XXVII

HOOK AND "THE DEAN OF PATCHAM"



From a lithograph after a drawing by Daniel Maclise.

THEODORE HOOK.

CHAPTER XXVII

HOOK[1] AND "THE DEAN OF PATCHAM"[2]

THE men whose careers have been traced in earlier chapters were all more or less dependent primarily for their success in the *beau monde* on their dress or their eccentricities, and if they were witty, that was merely a happy accident. But there was another class of man which occupied a prominent place in society almost entirely by virtue of an amusing tongue. For many years Sheridan had this field to himself, or, at least it may be said, he was so much more entertaining than any of his contemporaries, that the others counted for little; but when the Regency was established Sheridan's day had passed, and the new generation that had been treading on his heels, though it could not hope to eclipse the records of his brilliance, stepped into his shoes, and filled them as best it could.

[1] Theodore Edward Hook; 1788–1841.

[2] Rev. Edward Cannon.

Exactly when the *beau* ends and the society wit begins is not easy to say, especially if the conception of the former as sketched in the Introductory chapter of this work, is accepted,[1] but Lord Alvanley, who was both leader of fashion and wit, may, perhaps, be accepted as the link between these divisions. Byron and Tom Moore, of course, had wit in plenty, but they were not essentially society wits, and their place is in another and more distinguished category, that does not come within the scope of this book; while "Conversation" Sharpe, Scrope Davies, Joseph Jekyll, and such personages, while their humour is not to be denied, may be put aside as lesser luminaries.

Theodore Hook, Sydney Smith, Samuel Rogers, who talked better than he wrote, and Henry Luttrell, of whom the same may be said, were society wits rather than *beaux*, and, moving in the society of the day, cannot be excluded in any account of the lighter side of life under the Regency. They were in great request at dinner-parties and at country-houses—Rogers, perhaps, less than the others after a time, for he showed a persistent dislike to moving in mixed company; and they had a unique place and distinction. It

[1] *See* vol. i. p. xxi-xxii.

has recently been related by Sir Henry Drummond Wolff how Abraham Hayward, explaining the constitution of English society to a Cingalese gentleman who had just come to this country, said, "You will find in England that men of distinction who belong neither to the aristocracy nor to the richer classes, but have made a mark either in literature or by their conversational powers, are always received in great houses on a footing of perfect equality"; upon which the Cingalese remarked very naïvely, "But are these not called sycophants?"[1] While some of the minor lights may have flattered, the great wits were, on the other hand, the recipients of much adulation. They may have been loved, indeed; but there is no doubt they were also feared, for no man might attack them with impunity: if they had a short way with bores, they could, and did, annihilate impertinents with a phrase. Hook's humour, it must be confessed, was akin to burlesque, but the others had a more refined wit, and it is beyond question that by their good sense and intelligence they exercised, perhaps an unnoticed, but certainly a no less effectual influence for good upon the society in which they moved.

[1] *Rambling Recollections*, vol. i. p. 78.

Theodore Hook is but a name to-day, and that name but of very secondary importance; his novels are not read, his "Sayings and Doings" are forgotten, his plays do not hold the stage, and his humour is generally, but to some extent unreasonably, held—especially by those who know nothing of his witty sallies—to be old-fashioned. However, though his works are dead, himself lives for all time as Lord Steyne's henchman, Wagg, in "Vanity Fair," in which book Thackeray had the audacity to put into Wagg's mouth one of the jokes of that character's prototype: Wagg is made to ask Mrs. Bungay, the publisher's wife, "Does your cook say he's a Frenchman?" and to reply, when the lady expresses her ignorance of the servant's nationality, "Because, if he does, he's a-quizzin' yer (*cuisinier*)!" Disraeli, too, has helped to save Hook from oblivion, by introducing him in "Vivian Grey" as Stanislaus Hoax, and in "Coningsby" as Lucian Gay. "Nature had intended Lucian Gay for a scholar and a wit: necessity had made him a scribbler and buffoon. He had distinguished himself at the University; but he had no patrimony, nor those powers of perseverance which success in any learned profession requires. He was good-looking, had great animal spirits, and a keen sense of enjoyment,

From a mezzotint engraving by T. Lupton, after a painting by G. Clint, A.R.A.

MARIA FOOTE.

and could not drudge. Moreover, he had a fine voice, and sang his own songs with considerable taste; accomplishments which made his fortune in society, and completed his ruin."[1] This description is accurate, and may well be taken as the basis of any account of the man whom Tom Campbell called a "wonderful creature" and Coleridge thought "as true a genius as Dante."

The son of James Hook, a musical composer, and of a literary mother (*née* Madden), the author of many novels long since forgotten, Theodore Edward Hook was born on September 22, 1788. He was a precocious youngster, and at sixteen years of age supplied the *libretto* to his father's comic opera, "The Soldier's Return," and a year later wrote a popular melodrama, "Tekeli, or, The Siege of Mongratz," which secured for him a niche in "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers":—

> "Gods! o'er those boards shall Folly rear her head,
> Where Garrick trod, and Kemble lives to tread?
> On those shall Farce display Buffoon'ry's mask,
> And Hook conceal his heroes in a cask?"

Before he came of age he had written pieces for Liston and Terry, and had come into conflict with the dramatic Censor, who refused to sanction the

[1] *Coningsby*, chap. v.

performance of one of his dramas. Hook had an interview with the Licenser of Plays, when the latter, according to the angry author, "actually shook his head *as if there were something in it*"; but, obtaining no satisfaction, avenged himself by a slashing attack in a preface to the printed version of the play.

Already a distinguished personage, Hook entered himself at St. Mary's Hall, Oxford; and his inability to resist a joke nearly cost him his admission. When asked by the Vice-Chancellor if he was prepared to sign the Thirty-nine Articles, he replied, with what cannot be considered but as an excess of courtesy, "Oh, yes, sir, quite ready; *Forty*, if you please." The difficulty he had in explaining away this jest did not prevent him shortly afterwards answering an examination question, the gist of which was, "Given C A B, find Q": "Take your C A B through Hammersmith, turn to the left just before you come to Brentford, and Q (Kew) is right before you."

Before this, however, he had acquired fame as a chartered libertine of practical joking, and was the proud possessor of a complete collection of knockers and bell-pulls: he had too, with great daring and at much risk, secured one of the wooden Highlanders that stood before tobacco-

nists' shops, and had even contrived to lasso a gilt eagle, the sign hanging over an inn. He was soon, however—to be exact, in 1809—to eclipse all his previous efforts by inventing the famous Berners Street hoax, which, not funny in itself, stands alone by virtue of the thoroughness with which it was carried out.

With the aid of two confederates, a lady and a gentleman, some four thousand letters were despatched, inviting the recipients on some pretext or another to call on a certain day at 54, Berners Street, Oxford Street, the residence of a Mrs. Tottenham, who had, on some account, Hook's biographer states, fallen under the displeasure of this formidable trio. "Scarce had the eventful morning begun to break," the chronicler relates, "ere the neighbourhood resounded with the cries of 'Sweep,' uttered in every variety of tone, and proceeding from *crowds* of sooty urchins and their masters, who had assembled by five o'clock beneath the windows of No. 54. In the midst of the wrangling of the rival professors, and protestations of the repudiating housemaid, heavy waggons laden with chaldrons of coals from the different wharves came rumbling up the street, blockading the thoroughfare, impeding one another, crushing and struggling to reach the same goal, amid a

hurricane of imprecations from the respective *conducteurs*. Now among the gathering crowd, cleanly, cook-like men were to be seen, cautiously making their way, each with a massive wedding-cake under his arm, tailors, boot-makers, upholsterers, undertakers with coffins, draymen with beer-barrels, *etcetera*, succeeded in shoals; and long before the cumbrous coal-waggons were enabled to move off, about a dozen travelling chariots-and-four, all ready for the reception of as many 'happy pairs,' came dashing up to the spot. Medical men with instruments for the amputation of limbs, attorneys prepared to cut off entails, clergymen summoned to minister to the mind, and artists engaged to portray the features of the body, unable to draw near in vehicles, plunged manfully into the mob. Noon came, and with it about forty fishmongers, bearing about forty 'cod and lobsters,' as many butchers, with an equal number of legs of mutton; and as the confusion reached its height, and the uproar became terrific, and the consternation of the poor old lady grew to be bordering on temporary insanity, up drove the great Lord Mayor himself—state carriage, cocked hats, silk stockings, bag-wigs, and all." Yet in this affair Hook flew at

[1] Barham: *Life of Hook*, vol. i. pp. 73–4.

higher game than a Lord Mayor, for the Governor of the Bank of England called, allured thither by a letter stating that to him, and to him alone, would be revealed a complicated system of fraud pursued by minor officials at Threadneedle Street; and a similar inducement brought the Chairman of the East India Company; while royalty itself, in the person of the Duke of Gloucester, was drawn to Berners Street under the pretext that a dying woman, once the attendant of his Royal Highness's mother, would make a confidential communication of the greatest importance.

The hoax caused so much stir among the victims, and especially among those tradesmen who had suffered in purse by executing the fictitious orders, that an official inquiry was set on foot; but so carefully had the preparations been made, that there was no result, although it was generally believed that Hook had a hand in it. Indeed, so strong was the suspicion, that the wag thought it best to retire into the country until the matter had blown over. However, many years later, in "Gilbert Gurney," he avowed the authorship of the colossal joke. "Copy the joke and it ceases to *be* one—any fool can imitate an example once set," he very rightly said in that novel; but he could not refrain from patting

himself on the back, "but for originality of thought and design, I *do* think that was perfect!"

There was no end to Hook's impertinences. One afternoon, walking down a street with Daniel Terry, he saw a party sitting down to dinner, and on the spot he made a bet with his companion that he would dine and remain there for five hours. He entered the house, was shown into the dining-room, took a seat at the table, and with an apology for being late, began to partake of the soup. He had set the table in a roar with his jokes, before his host, a courteous old gentleman, had recovered from his amazement.

"I beg your pardon, sir," said the latter at last, taking advantage of a lull in the conversation, "but your name, sir—I did not quite catch it—servants are so abominably incorrect, and I am really a little at a loss. . . ."

"Don't apologise, I beg," Hook replied graciously. "Smith—my name is Smith; and, as you justly observe, servants are always making some stupid blunder or other. I remember a curious instance . . ."

For several minutes Hook gave illustrations of the stupidity of servants.

"But, really, my dear sir," said the other, sticking to the point, which certainly was not

the carelessness of domestics, "I think the mistake on the present occasion does not originate in the source you allude to. I certainly did not anticipate the pleasure of Mr. Smith's company to dinner to-day."

"No, I dare say not—you said *four* in your note, I know, and it is now, I see, a quarter-past five—you are a little fast, by the way—but the fact is, I have been detained in the City, as I was about to explain when . . . "

"Pray," said the host, impatiently cutting short the explanation, "whom, may I ask, do you suppose you are addressing?"

"Whom? Why, Mr. Thompson, of course, old friend of my father. I have not the pleasure, indeed, of being personally known to you, but having received your kind invitation yesterday on my arrival from Liverpool—Frith Street—four o'clock—family party—come in boots—you see I have taken you at your word. I am only afraid I have kept you waiting."

"No, no; not at all. But permit me to observe, my dear sir, my name is not Thompson, it is Jones, and——"

"Jones!" exclaimed "Smith," affecting extreme horror. "Jones!—why, surely I must have—yes, I must—— Good heavens! I see it

all! My dear sir, what an unfortunate blunder!—wrong house—what must you think of such an intrusion!—you will permit me to retire at present, and to-morrow. . . . " And he added that his mistake was particularly annoying, as he had told a man to call for him at that address at ten o'clock.

The old gentleman, however, would not hear of "Smith's" going—a stranger in London—his friend who dined at four must long since have finished his meal—a man coming to call for him, too; and, in spite of Theodore's protests that he really must not trespass upon the other's hospitality, in the end he was prevailed upon to remain. In return he exerted himself to the utmost to entertain the company, until the actor arrived, when he declared his identity:

> "I am very much pleased with your fare,
> Your cellar's as prime as your cook;—
> My friend's Mr. Terry, the player,
> And I'm Mr. Theodore Hook."

Delightful is the story of Hook addressing a pompous-looking man in the Strand with the paralysing question, "I beg your pardon, sir, but may I ask, are you anybody particular?" But it must be admitted that, according to modern notions of humour, that is one of the few really

funny remarks he made. Sydney Smith always declared that Hook was lacking in true wit; and though at the time this remark was thought to be, at least in part, inspired by jealousy, there is no doubt, if we may judge by the specimens that have been handed down to this generation, that the Canon was right.

Indeed, in conversation and actions Hook seems as a rule to have been the buffoon rather than the humorist, and puns were his mainstay in talk. When it was announced that thirty-one baronets were to be made at the coronation, "Thirty-one baronets!" he exclaimed. "There's a pretty game of the Whigs! They'll make a bloody hand of it at any rate!" "Now, isn't this provoking?" he said to the Duke of Rutland, when at Belvoir Castle on the occasion of the coming of age of the Marquis of Granby: "I've lost my hat—what can I do?" "Why the devil did you part with your hat?" said his Grace. "I never do." "Ah!" said the visitor, "but you have especially good reason for sticking to your *beavor* (*Belvoir*)!" Even death could not stop his punning, for when asked if he had attended the funeral of Jack Reeve, "Yes," he replied, "I met him in his private box going to the pit!"

Lord William Pitt Lennox has recorded a con-

versation of Hook's which took place when they went for a walk, that fills us with anything but delight, though, doubtless, it was typical of the low-comedian. When they reached Vauxhall Bridge, "I wonder if this bridge pays," Lord William remarked. "Go over it, and you'll be *tolled*," replied Hook, who then addressed the gatekeeper, who was hoarse. "So you haven't recovered your voice yet?" "No, sir, I've caught a fresh cold." "But why did you catch a *fresh* one? Why didn't you have it *cured*?" "The Three Ravens" inn at Sutton suggested to Hook the reflection, "That fellow must be *raven* mad!" And very little better was his rejoinder to a party of labourers engaged in sinking a well, who, in answer to his inquiry, explained that they were "boring for water," "Water's a bore at any time; besides, you're quite wrong; remember the old proverb, Let *well* alone!"[1] Anything more dreary than this sort of thing it is difficult to conceive, and yet Hook attacked punning, and showed how not to do it:

> "My little dears, who learn to read,
> Pray, early learn to shun
> That very silly thing indeed,
> Which people call a PUN.

[1] *Drafts on My Memory*, vol. i. pp. 302–3.

Read Entick's rules, and 'twill be found
How simple an offence
It is to make the selfsame sound
Afford a double sense.

"For instance, *ale* may make you *ail*,
Your *aunt* an *ant* may kill,
You in a *vale* may buy a *veil*,
And Bill may pay the *bill*;
Or if to France your bark you steer,
At Dover, it may be,
A *peer appears* upon the *pier*,
Who, blind, still goes to sea.

. . . . .

"The *dyer*, who by *dying* lives,
A *dire* life maintains;
The glazier, it is known, receives
His *profits* from his panes;
By gardeners *thyme* is tied, 'tis true,
When spring is in its prime:
But *time* or *tide* won't wait for you,
If you are *tied* for *time*."

. . . . .

Really marvellous were Hook's feats at improvisation, as the testimony of Leigh Hunt and Samuel Rogers goes to prove; and it was his favourite amusement to seat himself at the piano, and sing a rhyming account of the company, full of happy hits, and always sure to provoke hearty laughter. When the Reverend

Edward Cannon asked him, "Have you seen the Eccaleobion, or the place where breeding is made easy to the meanest capacity?" "*Eg*static thought!" cried Hook. "But where is it?" "Next to some bookshop," was the reply; whereupon Hook went on:

"The *Egg*-aleobion, where by heat, Dean of Patcham,
By *chicken*-rie *foul*, birds by dozen they hatch 'em,
Is next to a book-shop, the address, never mind it,
For, failing a-*t Egg's*,[1] you at *Hatch*-hard's [2] will find it!"

One day he was charged with preparing these apparently impromptu performances, and demanded indignantly to be put to the test. "Tell me," he said to his host, "who was that man that called just now and received your money so immediately." "Why," came the reply, "it was Mr. Winter, the tax-gatherer." Hook put all question of his readiness beyond doubt, by declaiming forthwith:

"Mr. Winter, I find, is collector of taxes,
And seems to get money whenever he axes,
And he gets it without either menace or flummery,
For though his name's Winter his process is summary!"[3]

[1] Thomas Tegg (1776–1845), a noted bookseller, whose shop was at 111, Cheapside.

[2] John Hatchard (1769–1849), who in 1797 founded the present well-known book-shop in Piccadilly.

[3] Joseph Jekyll: *Correspondence.*

These accomplishments opened the clubs to him —he was elected a member of the Eccentrics, to which Sheridan and Petersham belonged; and then secured him the *entrée* into society: the height of his success at this early date was his being presented by the Marchioness of Hertford to the Prince of Wales, with which latter personage he was soon on intimate terms. Dependent on his pen, however, Hook had to burn the candle at both ends, and spending his nights in joviality, he had to devote the days to the composition of farces and novels. Still, in spite of his literary activity, his earnings did not keep pace with his careless expenditure, and he was heavily in debt, when suddenly a golden vista opened before him. By the influence of the Regent or some other of his friends, he, to his great surprise and delight, received in 1812 the appointment of Accountant-General and Treasurer at the Mauritius, a post worth two thousand a year.

He arrived at the Mauritius in October of the following year, and at once plunged headlong into such gaieties as the place provided. For five years he remained there, and then a heavy deficit was discovered in the account: the amount missing being the, to Hook, enormous sum of £12,885.

He was at once placed under arrest, and sent back to England for examination; but even this disaster could not break his spirit. *En route* he met at St. Helena Lord Charles Somerset, then on his way to assume the governorship of the Cape. "I hope," said his Excellency, who was ignorant of the cause of Hook's return, "you are not going home for your health, Mr. Hook." "Why," replied the incorrigible wit, "I am sorry to say, they think there is something wrong with the *chest*!" That Hook was dishonest is a suspicion not for an instant to be entertained, and governments who select wits without any knowledge of figures or business as accountants-general must expect accounts to go unaudited: this view the Solicitor-General took, and he declared that there were no grounds for criminal prosecution. The civil authorities, the Board of Colonial Audit, took up the matter, however, and in 1821 Hook was declared a debtor to the Crown to the amount of the missing sum. As he could not possibly discharge such a debt, he was in 1823 imprisoned within the rules of the Bench, where he remained for more than a year. His spirits were so little damped by his misfortune, that at the very first dinner he ate outside the prison

walls he improvised a song, the chorus of which ran:

> "Let him hang, with a curse, this atrocious, pernicious Scoundrel, that emptied the till of Mauritius."

On his arrival in England, Hook took up his pen again and very shortly, under the pseudonym which was scarcely intended to be observed, "Dr. Vicesimus Blenkinsop," he published an attack on Alderman Wood, that stalwart but foolish defender of Queen Caroline. "Tentamen; or, An Essay towards the History of Whittington, sometime Lord Mayor of London," as it was called, may have suggested to the King's party that Hook's services would be invaluable to that cause. With this object in view, *John Bull*, a weekly Tory paper, was started, and Hook was installed as editor. Its bias against Queen Caroline and her adherents was made plain in the very first number, which contained some verses, probably written by the editor, one of which ran:

> "In short, each Whig Lord is an ass
> -emblage of all merit;
> And, to reward their virtuous lives,
> May all their daughters and their wives
> The Queen's good taste inherit."

This was followed by such effusions as "Hunting

the Hare," which undoubtedly did more to damage the Queen's cause than the trial. They achieved by means of ridicule what not all the evidence brought against her could do: if they did not diminish the unpopularity of the King, at least they frightened off many of the Queen's adherents, who feared to see their names recorded in scurrilous verses in subsequent issues of the paper.

"HUNTING THE HARE

"Would you hear of the triumph of purity?
Would you share in the joy of the Queen?
List to my song, and, in perfect security,
Witness a *row* where you durst not have been:
All kinds of addresses.
From collars of S. S.,
To vendors of cresses,
Came up like a fair,
And all through September,
October, November,
And down to December,
They *hunted this Hare!*

. . . . .

"Bold, yet half-blushing, the gay Lady Jersey
Drove up to the entrance, but halted outside,
While Sefton's fair bride, from the banks of the Mersey,
Who promised to keep her in countenance, shyed.
But this never hinders
The sham Lady L——,

Who stoutly goes in-doors—
Old Rush does the same ;
Great scorn of all such is !
But Bedford's brave Duchess,
To get in her clutches,
Delighted the dame.

. . . . .

" Noel and Moore are the pink of her quality,
Judge what must be the more mean partisans !
What sweepers of kennels, what scums of rascality,
Hired and attired to enact artisans ;
Sham painters, and stainers,
Smiths, coopers, cordwainers,
And glaziers, chief gainers,
In such a turmoil,
Though chandlers and joiners,
And forgers and coiners,
And pocket-purloiners,
All share in the spoil.

. . . . .

" And now, ere I send off my song to the town-sellers,
('Twill fetch rather more than the speeches of Hume),
We'll give one huzza to her pure privy-councillors,
Lushington, Williams, Wilde, Denman, and Brougham ;
With Vizard, and Cobbett,
And Hunt who would mob it,
And Cam who would job it,
As Dad did before,—

With Waitheman, the prate man,
And Pearson, the *plate*-man,
And Matthew the great man,
Who found us the *Hare*."

"Hunting the Hare" was but one of many attacks made upon the bodies which presented addresses to her Majesty; and, indeed, there was no matter in connection with that unfortunate lady, that did not serve as a peg for Hook to hang verses upon. When a subscription was raised to build her a palace, as the King would not grant her a royal residence, there appeared a bitter lampoon upon the Whigs, entitled "The Queen's Subscription"; while Hook made it a habit to record the names of her visitors at Brandenburgh House:

"Have you been to Brandenburgh—heigh, ma'am; ho, ma'am?
Have you been to Brandenburgh, ho?
Oh, yes; I have been, ma'am,
To visit the Queen, ma'am,
With the rest of the galanty show-show,
With the rest of the galanty show.

"And who were your company—heigh, ma'am; ho, ma'am?
And who were your company, ho?
We happened to drop in
With *gemmen* from Wapping,

And *ladies* from Blowbladder-row—Row,
And ladies from Blowbladder-row."

. . . . . .

Subsequently Hook invented Mrs. Ramsbottom, a nineteenth-century Mrs. Malaprop,[1] to take the place of Queen Caroline after the death of her Majesty; but, though his connection with *John Bull* was an open secret, from first to last he always denied the fact, and even inserted in the paper the following disclaimer:

"MR. THEODORE HOOK.

"The conceit of some people is amusing. Our readers will see we have received a letter from *Mr. Hook* disavowing and disclaiming all connection with this paper. Partly out of good nature, and partly from an anxiety

[1] As the form of humour employed by Hook in Mrs. Ramsbottom's effusions is now very out-of-date, and the book seldom comes into the hands of the modern reader, to give an example of the style may, therefore, not be supererogatory. Mrs. Ramsbottom is on the steam-packet, where she is much surprised by the cabin, . . .

"where ladies and gentlemen are put upon shelves like books in a library, and where tall men are doubled up like boot-jacks, before they can be put away at all. A gentleman in a hairy cap, without his coat, laid me perpendicularly on a mattrass, with a basin by my side, and said that was my *birth*. I thought it would have been my death, for I was never so indisposed in all my life. There was no *symphony* to be found among the tars (so called from their smell), for just before we went off I heard them throw a painter overboard, and directly after they called out to one another to hoist up an ensign. I was too ill to enquire what the poor young gentleman had done."

to show this gentleman how little desirous we are to be associated with him, we have made a declaration which doubtless will be quite satisfactory as to his morbid sensibility and affected squeamishness. We are free to confess that two things surprised us in this business: the first, that anything we have thought worth publishing should have been mistaken for *Mr. Hook's*, and secondly, that *such a person as Mr. Hook* should think himself disgraced by a connexion with JOHN BULL."

Hook received for his services as editor and principal contributor to *John Bull* the princely salary of two thousand pounds a year, and, whatever may be thought of the taste he displayed in this political organ, there is no doubt this labourer was worth his hire, for there was no other man who could and would have done the work.

"Lord of the squib, and primate of the pun,
Fat THEODORE, thy wreaths for these are won!
The *ton*'s hired Comus thou—thy brains each week
Can void in columns puns thou dar'st not speak;
Who, prompt like thee, can hatch an unclean joke,
Or give to b——y wit the master-stroke?
So meaningly, who throw the smutty hint,—
Thou punning improvisator in print?
May George enrol thee for his Windsor fool,
A dinner wit, surpassing Villiers' school!" [1]

[1] "Holy Bob": *The Age Revisited.*

Hook's editorship of *John Bull* was by no means his sole source of income, and he received not less than one thousand pounds for each series of "Sayings and Doings." Being deterred by no thought for the morrow, he never thought to lay by money for later years, when his work might not be so much in demand, and in 1827 he established himself in a large house in Cleveland Row. Four years later, however, he was compelled to retrench, and he removed to the less expensive neighbourhood of Fulham, where he remained until his death in 1841, at the age of fifty-two. It is proof of his culpable carelessness in money matters that he died penniless, and left his mistress and the five children she had borne him to the charity of others.[1] Yet to the end he was in receipt of a sufficient income, for in 1836 he was appointed editor to *The New Monthly Magazine*, with a salary of four hundred pounds a year, and extra for contributions. Under this last heading he must have received considerable sums, for he wrote regularly for the periodical, in which appeared "Gilbert Gurney," the best of his novels; "Jack Brag," or, to give the story its

[1] For their benefit Hook's friends and admirers collected three thousand pounds, of which sum five hundred pounds was subscribed by the King of Hanover.

full title, "The Adventures of Jack Brag after he joined the Legion in Spain"; "Births, Marriages, and Deaths"; "Precepts and Practice," a collection of short tales; and a fragment of the unfinished "Peregrine Bunce."

It must have been during these later years that Hook became most widely known, for even in October 1832 Tom Raikes, staying at Sudbourne Hall, Lord Hertford's seat, noted, "Theodore Hook is of the party here. Hook is an author; he has written 'Sayings and Doings,' the farce of 'Killing no Murder,' etc. He is an editor, the chief compiler of *John Bull*, a wit and a wag,"[1]—which details, had Hook been so generally known as most writers contend, Raikes would scarcely have troubled to give. All his life Hook was an inveterate clubman: he was a member of the Garrick, the Athenæum, Crockford's, and the Carlton, and one of his most amusing *jeux d'esprit* was a rhyming description of these and similar institutions, of which one verse must suffice as an example of the whole:

"There's first the Athenæum Club, so wise, there's not a man of it
That has not sense enough for six (in fact, that is the plan of it);

[1] *Portion of a Journal.*

The very waiters answer you with eloquence Socratical ;
And always place the knives and forks in order mathematical."

To the last he was a favourite in society, and his company was always much in demand. Indeed, he spent so much time in this way that now and then a regret crossed his mind that he did not occupy himself more profitably. "I have a tolerably large, and an extremely agreeable circle of acquaintances—many people who know the world less than I do would call them friends—but still the memory of past days, and the recollection of what I *might* have been, compared with what I *am*, makes me seek at certain times the charm and comfort of solitude," he wrote towards the end of his life. "I do not mean in the gloomy sense of the word, I mean the charm and comfort of being alone, free, and my own master—uncontrolled, unchecked, and independent. This feeling—this desire to leave all gaiety—all the society in which one ordinarily moves—to cast off the world and its cares, or, as they are sometimes called, pleasures, has led me to make my annual tour, just during the period in which partridge-shooting ceases to be a novelty, and pheasant-shooting had

not begun."[1] He might express his weariness of the social round, and cry :

> " Give me a punt, a rod and line,
> A snug arm-chair to sit on,
> Some well-iced punch and weather fine,
> And let me fish at Ditton ; "

but he knew all the time that the first invitation he received would be accepted without the least hesitation. His health at last gave way, and though he exclaimed sadly, " Ah ! I see I look as I am—done up in purse, in mind, and in body too, at last," he carried out his doctor's instructions to avoid night air by night after night leaving Crockford's after dawn !

It was not, however, the double strain of work and pleasure that wore him out, but to some extent anxiety resulting from financial troubles caused by his passion for gaming, his extravagance, and his generosity—for a more humane, good-natured, charitable man never lived ; though his end, it is to be feared, was accelerated by his love for brandy-and-water. " His social and convivial talents rendered him a welcome guest," said one who met him frequently in the last decade of his life ; " but when the juice of the

[1] *Precepts and Practice*, vol. iii.

grape had lost its exhilarating power, he took to spirits to keep up the stimulus; under which he gradually sank."[1] Of his convivial habits a most amusing story has been recorded. Stephen Price, the manager of Drury Lane Theatre, gave a supper party, to which he invited Hook and Edward Cannon. In due course the other guests left, and Price, who was unwell, waited some time for the two wits to go; but, seeing they were engrossed in conversation, and now feeling ill, he slipped unobserved from the room, gave his butler orders to put a plentiful supply of spirits on the table, and went to bed. The next morning about nine o'clock a servant called Price, who at once asked:

"Well, sir, pray, at what time did those two gentlemen go last night?"

"Go, sir?" echoedthe valet in surprise.

"I asked you, sir, at what time did Mr. Hook and Mr. Cannon *go*?"

"Oh, they are not gone yet, sir. They've just rung for coffee!"

Hook and Cannon were great cronies, and the latter has come down to posterity as "The Dean of Patcham,"[2] a nickname conferred by the

[1] Raikes: *Portion of a Journal.*

[2] Patcham was a village close to the Pavilion of Brighton, which Hook always insisted should be made into a deanery for Cannon.

former, who portrayed his friend, in not too flattering a manner, as Godfrey Moss in his novel of "Maxwell." The novelist read the scene to Cannon, who made no objection, and afterwards dismissed the subject with, "The *cretur* has drawn one half of the picture well enough, but he has somehow quite forgotten the other!"

Cannon, who was a chaplain to the Prince Regent, whom in after days he always referred to as "George and so forth," was by no means an easy person to get on with, for his humour was usually too personal and too sardonic to be appreciated by his listeners. All subjects might be treated as ludicrous, so far as he was concerned, except sacred things, about which he would permit no joking in his presence. "Come, come, my Hookums,"—it was his custom to add "ums" to most names—"stop there," he reproved his friend one day, when the matter in question was the Bible; "be what you think witty with anything else, but *that is my book*, and you must not touch *that*." He had no scruples, however, about poking fun at his clerical superiors. One day he was attacking a certain bishop, when another clergyman protested. "Remember, my dear sir," said the latter, "his lordship has been a kind friend to me: I am under the greatest

obligation to him: it was he who gave me the living of C——." "Well," said Cannon, with an air of finality, "he ought to be hanged for *that*!"

Cannon, though a very good-natured man, became spoilt, and the licence he permitted his tongue eventually resulted in his being removed from his chaplaincy. An admirable musician, he was one day invited by Mrs. Fitzherbert to give his opinion of an upright piano, an instrument only recently introduced, of which she had just become the proud possessor. "Why, madam," he said, after playing a few chords, "it may do very well to lock up your bread and cheese in, but that's all it's fit for!" He was very fond of singing the ballad of "Bold Robin Hood and the Bishop of Hereford," and when there was music at the Pavilion, if he was not called upon to perform, he became unbearable. Thus, when one evening the Prince volunteered to sing an air of Storeace's, which, he said, "suits my voice admirably," and asked Cannon to accompany him, the latter, being compelled to obey, took his revenge by interpolating such remarks as "*Piano, piano*, your Royal Highness," and ostentatiously beating time with his foot. The listening circle applauded, and the Prince, who really knew something about music, turned to the pianist, and

said, "Eh—eh—eh—dammy, Cannon, did I not sing that well?" "Excuse me, your Royal Highness," said the latter, contemptuously, "but I never heard it so indifferently sung!"

Cannon had a great gift for improvisation, but as a rule not even Hook could induce him to write down the verses that sprang to his lips so spontaneously. Once, however, he yielded to his friend's pressure, and the manuscript was duly preserved for the edification of future generations.

"THE DEAN

"Once upon a time there was a Dean
Lord L—— made by mistake,
For if he had known him as well as I,
There never had been such a make.

"This Dean was a man about four feet high.
With a skin like the skin of a toad,
On a waistcoat before a collar he wore,
Beautiful, red, and broad.

"Behind that red, there beat a heart
As black as a Dean's need be;
He talked of his 'feelings,' as many Deans do,
But that was—Hypocrisy.

"Two men of worth in their different states
Did once to his choir belong,
The first of these I call Tom for short,
Jonathan t'other, for long.

" Poor Jonathan went his weary way
To see his mother when dying ;
Think you when Jonathan mourning came back
He found the Dean a-crying ?

" ' Oh, no ! ' to Jonathan thus he said,
' Your mother is under ground,
But you've been away for many a day.
I shall fine you forty pound.'

" Poor Tom is dead—around his grave
His weeping comrades stay,
But as to the Dean, he was not to be seen,
His ' feelings ' kept him away !

" 'Twas so said—but had poor Tom
Been a lord, or anything higher,
The Dean had been there, with mock visage of care,
And his tears would have filled the choir.

" Beggars on horseback ride but one way,
And this is our hope and desire,
When Tom is happy with his music above
May the Dean sit downstairs with the fire."

CHAPTER XXVIII

"PETER PLYMLEY"

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"PETER PLYMLEY"[1]

THERE was no man, not excepting Henry Luttrell, to whose charm and wit greater tribute was paid by men of all shades of opinion than to Sydney Smith. Sang Moore:

"Rare Sydney! thrice honour'd stall where he sits,
And be his every honour he deigneth to climb at!
Had England a hierarchy formed of all wits,
Whom, but Sydney, would England proclaim as its Primate?
And long may he flourish, frank, merry, and brave,
A Horace to feast with, a Pascal to read!
While he *laughs* all is safe; but when Sydney grows grave,
We shall then think the Church is in danger indeed!"

And even that dull clergyman, historian, and novelist, the Reverend George Croly, found in Sydney Smith an inspiration that made his Muse a degree less dreary than usual.

[1] Rev. Sydney Smith, 1771–1845.

" Where shall we find thy rival, sportive Sydney ?
Tory in heart, and whig alone in name,
(Their solemn spleen was never of thy kidney)
Yet making of them both thy lawful game,
Swift's living portrait, in a Canon's frame !
Now kicking Peachum, and now trouncing Lockit ;
Time only giving brightness to thy fame,
Thy humour beaming broadest in its socket,
Thou'rt gone with all thy blaze, thou reverend Congreve-rocket ! " [1]

" The wisest of witty men, and the wittiest of wise men," as Mrs. Norton described him, Sydney Smith was one of the most fortunate. Educated at Winchester, he became Captain of the School, and both he and his brother Courtenay showed such marked ability that their schoolfellows signed a round-robin, declining to compete for prizes if those two lads entered. Elected to a scholarship at New College, Oxford, at the age of twenty-two, Sydney obtained a fellowship, whereafter, in deference to his father's wishes, he abandoned his desire to proceed to the bar, and, instead, entered the Church. Appointed to a curacy [2] at Netheravon, in the heart of Salisbury

[1] *The Modern Orlando*, p. 164.

[2] Subsequently he described the country curate : " The poor working man of God—a learned man in a hovel, good and patient—the first and poorest pauper of the hamlet, yet showing in the midst of worldly

Yrs Sydney Smith

AUTHOR OF "PLYMLEY'S LETTERS ON THE CATHOLICS"
From a lithograph after a drawing by Thackeray.

REV. SYDNEY SMITH.

Plain—"a pretty feature in a plain face," he described it—he was lucky enough to attract the attention of a neighbouring squire, Mr. Hicks-Beach, Member of Parliament for Circencester, who invited him to act as tutor to his son and to go with his charge to Weimar. This offer he gladly accepted, and the twain set out, only to be "driven, by stress of politics," as in a letter to his mother he referred to the war, into Edinburgh.

At Edinburgh, "that garret of the earth—that knuckle-end of England—that land of Calvin, oatcakes, and sulphur," as he described it, Sydney Smith, having secured the office of preacher in a small Episcopalian church in the Canongate, remained with his pupil for two years. He found the city an agreeable place, in spite of the fact, trying to a man with his tendency to see things in a humorous light, that, as he used to say, "it requires a surgical operation to get a joke well into a Scotch understanding." In other ways, and with the exception of an undue devotion to metaphysics, he found Scotsmen pleasant companions, and good-tempered so long as no attack was made upon the climate of the land wherein they dwelt; "even Jeffrey," he declared, "cannot

misery he has the heart of a gentleman, the spirit of a Christian, and the kindness of a pastor."

shake off the illusion that myrtles flourish at Craig Crook!" There he made friends with Horner, Playfair, Scott, Dugald Stewart; and with Brougham and Jeffrey founded *The Edinburgh Review*, to which he was then and afterwards a regular contributor. In Edinburgh, too, he found his wife, Miss Pybus, whom he married in 1799. "There, Kate, you lucky girl," he exclaimed one day, as he threw into her lap half-a-dozen worn-out, battered silver tea-spoons, "I give you all my fortune!"

In 1803 he left Scotland with regret. "I shall be like a full-grown tree, transplanted, deadly sick at first, with bare and ragged fibres, shorn of many a root," he wrote to Jeffrey; but soon after he had settled himself and his household gods at No. 8, Doughty Street, he was reconciled to the change by finding himself a popular preacher. He obtained the office of evening preacher at the Foundling Hospital, for which he was rewarded with the stipend of fifty pounds a year; and he attracted such large congregations that he was much in demand, and thereafter preached on Sunday mornings alternately at Berkeley Chapel and Fitzroy Chapel. Between 1804 and 1806, too, he lectured on Moral Philosophy at the Royal Institution with great success, drawing large

audiences. Indeed, he became so well known a personage that he received an offer of two hundred pounds for permission to reprint some sermons—which same sermons he subsequently recommended to Blancho White, when that gentleman one day complained to him of insomnia. "I can furnish you with an infallible soporific," he said. "I have published two volumes of sermons. I will send them to you; they will last a long time. You are to take them to bed with you, and begin at the beginning. Before you have read three pages you will be fast asleep; but take care that you put the candle in a safe place, or you will sleep so sound, you will be burnt to death."

Smith's "Peter Plymley" letters, published in 1807, in defence of Catholic Emancipation spread his fame throughout the land, and thereafter every word he spoke or wrote secured attention. In politics he was a reformer, though he opposed the ballot, and in theology a follower of Paley. His opinion of the Puseyites may be deduced from the following verses—there were nine in all—written after Lord Justice Knight Bruce asked counsel in court if they could define a Puseyite, but could get no one to attempt an answer.

"Pray tell me, what's a Puseyite? 'Tis puzzling to describe
This ecclesiastic genus of a pious, hybrid tribe.
At Lambeth and the Vatican, he's equally at home,
Altho', 'tis said, he rather gives the preference to Rome.

. . . . . .

"He's great in punctilios, where he bows and where he stands,
In the cutting of his surplice, and the hemming of his bands,
Each saint upon the Calendar he knows by heart at least,
He always dates his letters on a 'Vigil' or a 'Feast.'

. . . . . .

"He talketh much of discipline, yet when the shoe doth pinch,
This most obedient, duteous son will not give way an inch;
Pliant and obstinate by turns, whate'er may be the whim,
He's only for the Bishop when the Bishop is for him."

. . . . . .

In society Sydney Smith was so amusing[1] that

[1] Point was given to his drolleries by his heavy, plain, expressionless countenance; but it was his brother Robert Percy, better known as "Bobus," Advocate-General of Bengal from 1803 to 1810, who, when the conversation was of hereditary beauty, by speaking of his mother's personal attraction, drew from Talleyrand the remark: "*Ah! mon ami, c'était apparemment monsieur votre père, qui n'était pas beau.*"

It was "Bobus," who had a pretty wit of his own, who gave the historic advice to Macaulay, when the latter was about to sail for

there are several instances of people who forgot the parson in the humorist, like the young lady who burst out laughing when he said grace after dinner, and excused her lapse of manners by remarking, "You are always so amusing!" Grantley Berkeley has expressed his opinion that Smith seemed anxious to hide his clerical gown under a suit of motley: "Wherever he went, his ambition was, apparently, not merely to set the table in a roar, but the chairs, the sideboard, and the family portraits!"[1] But Grantley Berkeley is alone in attributing such perverted humour to the wit, and men so different as Rogers and Charles Greville unite to praise him. "Whenever the conversation is getting dull, Sydney throws in some touch which makes it rebound and rise again as light as air," said the former; while the latter "never heard anything more entertaining than Sydney Smith; such bursts of merriment, and so dramatic!" Ticknor, too, who met him in 1819, dubbed him "the soul of society," and declared he "never saw a man so formed to float down the stream of conversation, and, without seeming to have any direct influence upon it, to give it his

India: "Always manage to have at your table some fleshy, blooming young Writer or Cadet, just come out, that the mosquitoes may stick to him and leave the rest of the company alone."

[1] *My Life and Reminiscences*, vol. iii. p. 159.

own hue and charm."[1] It was not unnatural, therefore, that he became a great society favourite, and that his company was sought at all tables—which prompted him to describe the *dining* process, by which people in London extract all they can from the latest literary man: "Here's a new man of genius arrived; put on the stew-pan; fry away; we'll soon get it all out of him."[2]

Many of his innumerable *bon-mots* were connected with his profession, and he was never chary of poking fun at his superiors in the clerical hierarchy. Of a certain Dean he said he "deserved to be preached to death by wild curates"; and the Bishop of Exeter he thought "so like Judas Iscariot that I now firmly believe in the Apostolical Succession." The Bishop of Exeter was, evidently, no favourite with Smith, for it was to that dignitary, when they passed a shop, in the window of which was the legend, "Tongues cured here," he suggested, "Shall we go in, my lord?"

"Upper parsons," he said one day, with affected indignation, "live vindictively, and evince their aversion by an improved health. The Bishop of —— has had the rancour to recover after three

[1] *Life of George Ticknor*, vol. i. p. 265.
[2] Sir Henry Taylor: *Correspondence.*

paralytic strokes, and the Dean of —— to be vigorous at eighty-two; and yet these are men who are called Christians."

"You are afraid of me—you are crumbling your bread," he said to a young girl, his neighbour at a dinner party. "I do it when I sit by the Bishop of London, and with both hands when I sit by the Archbishop."

He had but little respect for his colleagues at St. Paul's, and when one day the question arose of a wood pavement around the cathedral, "Let the Canons once lay their heads together," he said, "and the thing is done."

"I had a very odd dream last night," he said one morning to Rogers. "I dreamed that there were thirty-nine Muses and nine Articles; and my head is still confused about them."

"If you masthead a sailor for not doing his duty," he inquired, "why should you not weathercock a parishioner for refusing to pay tithes?"

When asked if the Bishop of London was going to marry, "Perhaps he may," he replied; "yet how can a bishop marry? How can he flirt? The most he can say is, 'I will see you in the vestry after service!'"

Smith had a happy knack of introducing

Biblical allusions, but in a way that no one could resent.

When Rogers tried to light his table from the reflection of the pictures on the walls, the experiment was unsuccessful, for the light was thrown above and not on the table. "I don't like it at all," said the wit at the dinner-table; "all is light above, and all below is darkness and gnashing of teeth."

But the best of all his sayings, perhaps, was his reply to Landseer, who asked him to sit for his portrait: "'Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this thing?'"

But Smith, as a matter of fact, could joke upon any subject.

Very pithily he put his story of Lady Cook, whom he so impressed by a charity sermon that she asked him to lend her a guinea for her contribution. "I did so. She never repaid me, and spent it on herself."

The autocratic Lady Holland found her match in him, when in commanding tone she ordered him to ring the bell. "Oh, yes!" he said, hastening to obey; "and shall I sweep the floor?"

To a man he had never met before who had persistently called him "Smith" during the evening, he administered the subtle reproof as

they drove together to Lambeth Palace, "Now, don't, my good fellow, don't call the Archbishop 'Howley'!"

Macaulay he found an excellent butt, owing to his loquacity. At their first meeting the historian told Smith that meeting him was some compensation for missing Ramohun Roy, who was also to have been present. The doubtful compliment tickled the clergyman's sense of humour, and with apparent sternness he replied, "Compensation! Do you mean to insult me? A beneficed clergyman, an orthodox clergyman, a nobleman's chaplain, to be no more than compensation for a Brahmin, too, a fellow who has lost his own religion and can't find another; a vile heterodox dog, who, as I am credibly informed, eats beefsteaks in private! A man who has lost his caste! who ought to have melted lead poured down his nostrils, if the good old Vedas were in force, as they ought to be!"

Smith said of Macaulay that "he not only overflows with learning, but stands in the slop." He admitted that they both talked a great deal, but he declared that Macaulay never listened—at least to him. "Sometimes I have thought to myself," he added, "that when I'm gone Macaulay will be sorry he never heard my voice!" It was

the historian's attempt always to monopolise the conversation that prompted the rival talker to say, "I wish I could write poetry like you, Rogers; I would write an 'Inferno,' and I would put Macaulay among a lot of disputants—and gag him!" But perhaps later he withdrew this vindictive desire, for he was heard to say, "Macaulay is improved! Macaulay improves! I have observed in him of late—brilliant flashes of silence!"

Sydney Smith simply bubbled over with humour, to which he gave vent without stint, and he was as ready with his pen as with his tongue.

"I have divided mankind into classes," he wrote on one occasion. "There is the NOODLE—very numerous, but well known. The AFFLICTION-WOMAN—a valuable member of society, generally an ancient spinster, or distant relation of the family, in small circumstances; the moment she hears of any accident or distress in the family, she sets off, packs up her little bag, and is immediately established there, to comfort, flatter, fetch, and carry. The UP-TAKERS—a class of people who only see through their fingers' ends, and go through a room taking up and touching everything, however visible and however tender. The CLEARERS—who begin at the dish before

them, and go on picking or tasting till it is cleared, however large the company, small the supply, and rare the contents. The SHEEP-WALKERS—those who never deviate from the beaten track, who think as their fathers have thought since the Flood, who start from a new idea as they would from guilt. The LEMON-SQUEEZERS of society—people who act on you as a wet blanket, who see a cloud in the sunshine, the nails of the coffin in the ribbons of the bride, predictors of evil, extinguishers of hope; who, where there are two sides, see only the worst—people whose very look curdles the milk, and sets your teeth on edge. The LET-WELL-ALONERS—cousins-germane to the Noodle, yet a variety; people who have begun to think and to act, but are timid, and afraid to try their wings, and tremble at the sound of their own footsteps as they advance, and think it safer to stand still. Then the WASHERWOMEN—very numerous, who exclaim, 'Well! as sure as ever I put on my best bonnet, it is certain to rain,' etc. There are many more, but I forget them."

Receiving an invitation from a friend to dine at Fishmongers' Hall, he broke out into rhyme:

"Much do I love
The monsters of the deep to eat;

To see the rosy salmon lying,
By smelts encircled, born for frying;
And from the china boats to pour
On flaky cod the flavoured shower.
Thee above all, I much regard,
Flatter than Longman's flattest bard,
Much-honour'd turbot! sore I grieve
Thee and thy dainty friends to leave.
Far from ye all, in snuggest corner,
I go to dine with little Horner;
He who with philosophic eye
Sat brooding o'er his Christmas pie;
Then firm resolved, with either thumb,
Tore forth the crest-envelop'd plum;
And mad with youthful dreams of deathless fame,
Pronounced the deathless glories of his name."

Asked for a recipe for a salad, he jotted down the following instructions:

"To make this condiment, your poet begs
The pounded yellow of two hard-boil'd eggs;
Two boil'd potatoes, pass'd through kitchen sieve,
Smoothness and softness to the salad give.
Let onion atoms lurk within the bowl,
And, half-suspected, animate the whole.
Of mordant mustard add a single spoon,
Distrust the condiment that bites too soon;
But deem it not, thou man of herbs, a fault,
To add a double quantity of salt;
Four times the spoon with oil from Lucca brown,
And twice with vinegar procured from town;

And, lastly, o'er the flavour'd compound toss
A magic *soupçon* of anchovy sauce.
Oh, green and glorious ! oh, herbaceous treat !
'Twould tempt the dying anchorite to eat ;
Back to the world he'd turn his fleeting soul,
And plunge his fingers in the salad-bowl !
Serenely full, the epicure would say,
' Fate cannot harm me, I have dined to-day ! ' "

He could be serious on occasion, but even then he threw in a touch of drollery, as witness his letter, written from Foston in 1820, to Lady Georgiana Morpeth, giving a recipe for the cure of low spirits, from which, he declared, no one suffered more than he:

" 1st. Live as well as you dare. 2nd. Go into the shower-bath with a small quantity of water at a temperature low enough to give you a slight suggestion of cold, 75° or 80°. 3rd. Amusing books. 4th. Short views of human life—not further than dinner or tea. 5th. Be as busy as you can. 6th. See as much as you can of those friends who respect and like you. 7th. And of those acquaintances who amuse you. 8th. Make no secret of low spirits to your friends, but talk of them freely—they are always worse for dignified concealment. 9th. Attend to the effects tea and coffee produce upon you. 10th. Compare your lot with that of other people. 11th. Don't expect too much from human life—a sorry business at the best. 12th. Avoid poetry, dramatic representations (except comedy), music, serious novels,

melancholy, sentimental people, and everything likely to excite feeling or emotion not ending in active benevolence. 13th. *Do good*, and endeavour to please everybody of every degree. 14th. Be as much as you can in the air without fatigue. 15th. Make the room where you commonly sit, gay and pleasant. 16th. Struggle by little and little against idleness. 17th. Don't be severe upon yourself, or underrate yourself, but do yourself justice. 18th. Keep good blazing fires. 19th. Be firm and constant in the exercise of rational religion. 20th. Believe me, dear Lady Georgiana,

"Very truly yours,

"SYDNEY SMITH." [1]

After Sydney Smith had been some years in London, Erskine, then Lord Chancellor, was persuaded in 1808 to give him a living, and, of course, the recipient went to thank him. "Don't thank me, Mr. Smith," said Lord Erskine quaintly. "I gave you the living because Lady Holland insisted on my doing so; and if she had desired me to give it to the devil, *he* must have had it." [2] The living was that of Foston-le-Clay, in Yorkshire, worth five hundred a year, but in a very remote part of the county. "A diner-out, a wit, and a popular preacher, I was suddenly caught up by the Archbishop of York, and transported to my

[1] Reid: *Life and Times of Sydney Smith*, pp. 222–3.

[2] Rogers: *Table-Talk*, p. 228.

living in Yorkshire, where there had not been a resident clergyman for a hundred and fifty years," Smith wrote of the change. "Fresh from London, and not knowing a turnip from a carrot, I was compelled to farm three hundred acres, and without capital, to build a parsonage-house." He declared that it required a great deal of foresight adequately to provision the household when "you live twelve miles from a lemon." "By-the-bye," he added, after delivering himself of the historic phrase, "that reminds me of one of our domestic triumphs. Some years ago my friend C——, the arch-epicure of the Northern Circuit, was dining with me. On sitting down to dinner, he turned round to the servant and desired him to look into his great-coat pocket, and he would find a lemon, 'for,' he said, 'I thought it likely you might have duck and green peas for dinner, and therefore thought it prudent at this distance from a town to provide a lemon.' I turned round and exclaimed indignantly, 'Bunch, bring in the lemon bag,' and Bunch appeared with a bag containing a dozen lemons. C—— respected us wonderfully after that!"

There were some who doubted whether the man who was most at home in London society would prove a good parish priest, for he had little liking

for rural society. "I am in the position of the personage who, when he entered a village, straightway be found an ass," he declared; but, whatever his feelings, he was careful to hide them from his new neighbours. On his arrival at Foston he had some conversation with the octogenarian clerk, who delighted him with frank praise. "Muster Smith, it often stroikes moi moind that people as comes from London is such fools," said the old man. "But you, I see, are no fool." He took his duties with all due seriousness, and as there was no doctor within many miles, and having some knowledge of medicine, looked after the bodies as well as the souls of his parishioners, though, it must be confessed, his attempt to replace the doctor nearly resulted in the poisoning of a footman and a horse.[1] His talents, of course, were wasted at Foston, and Byron's lament was not by any means an exaggeration.

"I knew him in his livelier London days,
A brilliant diner-out, though but a curate,
And not a joke he cut but earn'd its praise,
Until preferment, coming at a sure rate,

[1] A baby, thought to be dying, was brought to him. "I just gave it a dose of castor-oil, and then I christened it," he reported to his wife; "so now the poor child is ready for either world."

(O Providence! how wondrous are Thy ways!
Who could suppose Thy gifts sometimes obdurate?)
Gave him, to lay the Devil who looks o'er Lincoln,
A fat fen vicarage, and nought to think on.

"His jokes were sermons, and his sermons jokes;
But both were thrown away amongst the fens;
For Wit hath no great friends in aguish folk:
No longer ready ears and shorthand pens
Imbibed the gay *bon-mot*, or happy hoax;
The poor priest was reduced to common sense,
Or to coarse efforts very loud and long,
To hammer a hoarse laugh from the thick throng."

For twenty years Sydney Smith remained at Foston, and then, in 1828, he was given a prebend at Bristol; whereupon he contrived to exchange the northern living for that of Combe-Florey. "If you have really any intention of paying me a visit, I must describe the *locale*," he wrote from the latter place to Monckton Milnes. "We live six miles from Taunton on the Minehead Road. You must give me good notice, and await my answer, for we are often full and often sick. It is but fair to add that nothing can be more melancholy and stupid than Combe-Florey—that we have no other neighbours than the Parsonism of the county, and that in the county I hibernate

[1] *Don Juan*, canto xvi. stanza lxxxii.

and lick my paws. Having stated these distressing truths, and assuring you that (as you like to lay out your life to the best advantage) it is not worth your while to come, I have only to add that we shall be very glad to see you."[1] Moore, too, came to see him at his new residence, and left some things behind, which his host sent after him. The poet acknowledged their receipt in some verses in which he declared that he had taken away "rich treasures to last him many a day":

"Recollections unnumbered of sunny Combe-Florey;
Its cradle of hills, where it slumbers in glory;
Its Sydney himself, and the countless bright things
Which his tongue or his pen, from the deep shining springs
Of wisdom and wit, ever flowingly brings.
Such being, on both sides, the 'tottle' amount,
We shall leave to your reverence to settle th' account."

Good times were in store for Smith's old age. He came into thirty thousand pounds on the death of his brother Courtenay; and in 1831 Lord Grey appointed him Canon Residentiary of St. Paul's, a position worth two thousand a year. Thereafter he lived, as he himself expressed it, "with one leg in Combe-Florey, and the other

[1] Lord Houghton: *Monograph.*

in London. If he had a grievance, it was that the Whigs never offered him a bishopric, which high office, he declared, however, he should have declined. It was said that Lord Grey intended him for one of the first vacancies, but the mitre was not for him; perhaps Lord Cockburn was not far wrong when he said that "wit and independence do not make bishops!" Still, Sydney Smith did not allow this to prey upon his mind, and he was content to enjoy the goods the gods gave him. "I am seventy-four years of age," he wrote three years before his death to Monsieur Eugène Robin, who asked him for some particulars of his life, to be inserted in an article in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, "and being Canon of St. Paul's, in London, and rector of a parish in the country, my time is equally divided between town and country. I am living among the best society in the metropolis; am at ease in my circumstances; in tolerable health; a mild Whig; a tolerating Churchman; and much given to laughing, and noise. I dine with the rich in London, and physic the poor in the country; passing from the sauce of Dives to the sores of Lazarus. I am, upon the whole, a happy man; have found the world an entertaining world, and am heartily thankful to Providence for the part

allotted to me in it." He died at his house in Green Street on February 21, 1845, in his seventy-seventh year, shortly after having uttered his last joke. Towards the end the nurse, in despair, confessed to having given him a bottle of ink instead of medicine. "Then," quoth the wit, "bring me all the blotting-paper there is in the house!"

It would be culpable indeed to turn from Sydney Smith without making at least a brief allusion to the serious side of his character.[1] As it has been seen, underlying many of his jokes there was sound common sense and no mean power of observation and judgment; but Smith had finer qualities than these. He was a great-hearted man, with a deep love of his fellow-creatures; and those who have studied his writings and his letters know the keen interest he took in the improvement of the condition of the poor and his efforts to make the discipline of prisons more humane; while more than one person who heard his sermon at St. Paul's on the accession of Queen Victoria could after half a century remember his stirring appeal to the young sovereign to do her duty in mitigating, so far as it lay in her power, the lot of the lower classes of her subjects.

[1] This side of the Canon's character is excellently depicted in Mr. Stuart J. Reid's *Life and Times of the Rev. Sydney Smith.*

CHAPTER XXIX

"THE DEAD DANDY"

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"THE DEAD DANDY"[1]

"ABSENT or present, still to thee,
My friend, what magic spells belong!
As all can tell who share with me
In turn thy converse and thy song.

"But when the dreaded hour shall come,
By Friendship ever dreamed too nigh—
And 'Memory' o'er her Druid's tomb
Shall weep that aught of thee can die—

"How fondly will she then repay
Thy homage offered at her shrine,
And blend, while ages roll away,
Her name immortally with *thine*."

So in 1812 did Byron apostrophise Samuel

[1] Samuel Rogers, 1763–1855.

Rogers, though six years later he wrote of him in a very different strain.

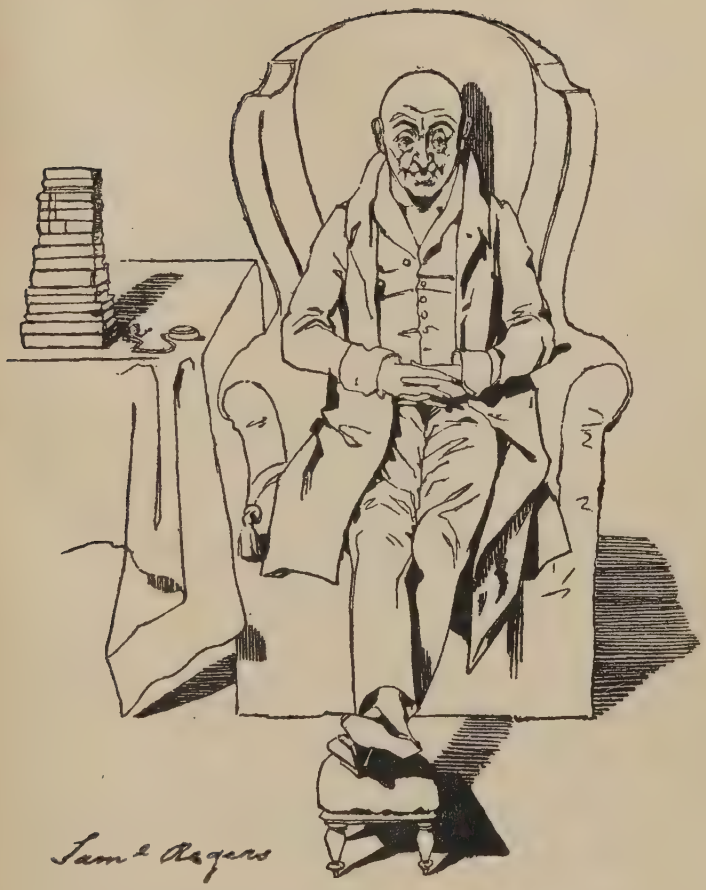
Rogers was indeed born with a silver spoon in his mouth, as he was the first to admit. "Nature had denied him much," he wrote, *à propos* of the gifts of the gods to himself,

> "But gave him at his birth what most he values :
> A passionate love for music, sculpture, painting,
> For poetry, the language of the gods,
> For all things here, or grand or beautiful,
> A setting sun, a lake among the mountains,
> The light of an ingenuous countenance,
> And, what transcends them all, a noble action." [1]

The chief proprietor in a banking-house, the working of which he deputed to a younger brother, he had leisure as well as means to indulge his literary and artistic tastes. "If you enter his house—his drawing-room—his library—you, of yourself, say, This is not the dwelling of a common mind," wrote Byron in his Journal. "There is not a gem, a coin, a book thrown aside on his chimney-piece, his sofa, his table, that does not bespeak an almost fastidious elegance in the possessor." [2] His literary tastes bore fruit in several poems, which brought him great praise.

[1] *Italy.*

[2] Rogers's art collection and library were sold after his death at Christie's, and they realised fifty thousand pounds.



THE AUTHOR OF "THE PLEASURES OF MEMORY."

From a lithograph after a drawing by Daniel Maclise.

SAMUEL ROGERS.

Indeed, he was more celebrated in his day as an author than as a wit; but this must have been because when in 1792 he published "The Pleasures of Memory," Wordsworth, Coleridge, Campbell, Moore, and Byron had either not written their best work or had not yet secured recognition. To-day, however, Rogers's literary achievements have found their way to the neglected top shelf, and the author is, like Luttrell, remembered chiefly by his *bon-mots*.

In *The Quarterly Review* for March 1813, when Rogers's fame was at its zenith, a vigorous attack was made on a volume of his verse, published the year before, in which, while admitting the popularity of "The Pleasures of Memory," the writer charged the poet with slipshod writing. "What, for instance, but extreme haste and carelessness," he said, "could have occasioned the author of 'The Pleasures of Memory' to mistake for verse such a line,

"'There silent sat many an unbidden guest.'?"

The article was, of course, unsigned, but the authorship was soon an open secret, and when Rogers learnt that the hostile critic was Ward,[1]

[1] John William Ward (1781–1833) succeeded his father as (fourth) Viscount Dudley and Ward, 1823; Foreign Secretary, 1827–8; created Earl of Dudley, 1827.

whom he had known for many years, his fury was unbounded. Soon after the appearance of this onslaught, a lady inquired:

"Have you seen Ward lately?"

"What Ward?" he asked coldly.

"Why, our Ward," she explained.

"*Our* Ward?" he retorted, purple with rage. "You may keep him all to yourself!"

Eventually Ward expressed regret for an attack which he admitted was indefensible, and the men became friends again; but not before Rogers, "with some little assistance from Richard Sharp," as his biographer quaintly states, had revenged himself in a couplet:

> "Ward has no heart, they say, but I deny it;
> He *has* a heart—and gets his speeches by it!"

Luttrell, too, had something to say of Ward's speaking by heart:

> "In vain my affection the ladies are seeking:
> If I gave up my heart, there's an end of my speaking!"

En passant, a few words may be said of Lord Dudley, the only child of a father with a taste for wine and a preference for an obsequious circle, and a mother, a beauty in her youth, unduly addicted to cards and strong waters.[1] His youth

[1] *Quarterly Review*, No. lxvii, p. 82.

was unhappy: educated by a private tutor in a separate establishment, with much money and little affection, he led a solitary life, and his unswerving attention to his studies, unrelieved by amusements of any kind, affected his health. Indeed, there were those who even in his early years thought his "serious, gentle, King-Charles-like expression, the peculiar, sloping lid of his mind-thoughtful eye, the prospect of his soul," were prescient of calamity.[1] He was sent to Oxford, where he was at different times at Oriel and Corpus Christi Colleges; and later to Edinburgh, where, housed under the roof of Dugald Stewart, he made the acquaintance of his fellow-students, Lord Lansdowne, Lord Palmerston, Lord Kinnaird, and Lord Ashburton. He entered Parliament in 1802 as a Tory, and he had strong views on the questions of Roman Catholic Emancipation, the emancipation of slaves, and Parliamentary reform; though he always declared he liked the House of Commons because "it keeps one in good company." Immensely wealthy, and

[1] *Quarterly Review*, No. lxvii, p. 82. Perhaps it was for this reason that he had such a strong objection to having his portrait taken. Once, however, he gave way to the persistent persuasions of his friends, and sat to Mr. Slater; but when the drawing was shown him, he crumpled it up, put it in his pocket, went away, and, it was supposed, destroyed it. Subsequently it was recovered, and it is still in existence.

having no expensive tastes to gratify, he devoted a considerable part of his income to charitable purposes; and fond of reading and writing, he expressed his belief that the happiest life would be fifteen hundred a year and the first floor over a bookseller's shop. He was a fine classical scholar, and when he was presented at the Tuileries to Louis XVII., the King, who prided himself upon his knowledge, addressed him with a quotation from Virgil, whereupon Lord Dudley, who knew that author almost by heart, finished the passage. Louis was delighted, and began in another place, and, when he stopped, the Englishman continued. The combat lasted for some time, to the great amazement of the courtiers, most of whom had not the slightest idea of what was happening, until the King, convinced that he had found a worthy antagonist, said, gracefully, "*Monsieur, je vous cède la palme.*"[1]

Lord Dudley was an admirable talker, and Harriet, Lady Granville, said that the charm of his conversation was exactly what was lacked by Luttrell—by whom all other conversationalists were measured: "a sort of abandon, and being entertaining because it is his nature, and he cannot help it." The only drawback was his two voices,

[1] Raikes: *Journal*, vol. ii. p. 171.

squeak and bass, which suggested to some wit that it was "like Lord Dudley conversing with Lord Ward!" He had a happy gift of repartee, and perhaps the best retort of his that has come down to us was when a Viennese lady said to him, "What wretchedly bad French you all speak in London!" "It is true, madame," he replied quietly, "we have not enjoyed the advantage of having the French twice in our capital!" He had a habit of uttering his thoughts aloud that often led to results as unfortunate as they were amusing to all but the persons concerned. The man who proposed that he and Lord Dudley should walk part of the way home together was scarcely delighted to hear the latter mutter, as if in consultation with himself, "I think I can endure him for ten minutes!" "I don't think it will bore me very much to let him walk with me that distance," was his audible reflection when some one proposed to accompany him from the Travellers' Club to the House of Commons. He hated to give a lift to any one, and when as he was leaving Brooks's he was forced to offer a fellow-member a place in his carriage, "What a bore!" he exclaimed aloud, as they neared his house in Mount Street. "It would be civil to say something. Perhaps I had better ask him

to dinner. I'll think about it!" "What a bore!" said his companion deliberately, also as if in communion with himself. "Suppose he should ask me to dinner! What should I do? I'll think about it!" One day he had at his dinner-table several foreign ministers and their wives, and, debating with himself whether he should for the nonce adopt the continental fashion of leaving the room with the ladies, he at last muttered, "I think we must *go out* all together." "Good G—d!" cried his neighbour, whose husband was in the ministry, and thought his remark must refer to a resignation of the Government, "you don't say so!"[1]

This habit grew on him as his brain became deranged, and to it was added a distressing absent-mindedness. He met Sydney Smith in the street and said to him, "Dine with me to-day; dine with me, and I will get Sydney Smith to meet you." "I admitted the temptation," the wit said afterwards, "and expressed my regret that I was engaged to meet him elsewhere!" At a lady's dinner-table, thinking it was his own house, he apologised for the *entrées*, and pleaded in mitigation that the *chef* was ill; and when a visitor more distinguished for his good looks than

[1] Moore: *Memoirs*, vol. v. pp. 236–7.

for good sense called at Dudley House, patting the head of his Newfoundland dog, "*Fido mio*," he said tenderly to the animal, "they say dogs have no souls. Humph! and still they say —— has a soul!" One day, when he was at Holland House, he asked John Allen to dinner, and when the guest arrived he found it was to be *tête-à-tête*. Asked how it went off, Allen said, "Lord Dudley spoke a little to his servant, and a great deal to his dog, but never addressed a word to me!" In the end Lord Dudley's malady became hopeless, and early in 1832 he was placed under proper care until his death, which occurred in March of the following year.

To return to Rogers. He and Luttrell were always bracketed together, but, though seldom apart, always sneered and laughed at and made fun of each other with such apparent heartiness, that it seems strange they should have remained friends, until it is remembered that each had considerable admiration for the other's works. An author will allow much licence to one who praises his books! Both men were kind-hearted, though they did their best to hide the fact; but Rogers was more frankly caustic in his comments on men and affairs.

"When I was young," Rogers explained to

Planché, "I used to say good-natured things, and nobody listened to me. Now that I am old I say ill-natured things, and everybody listens to me." When he tried to extort from Sir Philip Francis a confidence as to the authorship of the Letters of "Junius," receiving only a surly reply, he concluded that, "If Francis is not Junius, at least he is Junius Brutus"; and when Gally Knight,[1] a great talker and a notoriously bad listener, was growing hard of hearing it was Rogers who said, "It is from want of practice!" Perhaps the best example of Rogers's humour is to be found on the occasion when the company united to praise a Duke who had just come of age. "Everything is in his favour," some one summed up the nobleman's situation. "He has good looks, considerable abilities, and a hundred thousand pounds a year." "Thank God," said Rogers venomously, "he has bad teeth!"

More cruel was his comment on Lady Morley, a great favourite in society, who had every personal attraction save a musical voice: "There is but one voice against her in all England, and that is her own!"

Another typical instance of Rogers's humour

[1] Henry Gally Knight (1786–1846), the author of many Eastern tales.

was his account of a drive with Lady Holland, who was very nervous and never allowed her coachman to go quickly. Rogers expiated to some friends upon the ridiculous time it had taken to cover a short distance, and, clenching his fist as he recalled the discomfortof the journey, said, enraged, "The very funerals passed us!"

When Henry Hallam issued a supplementary volume to his "Europe during the Middle Ages," "Here is Hallam," remarked Rogers, "who has spent a whole life in contradicting everybody, now obliged to publish a volume to contradict himself." Hallam, indeed, was notorious for his love of argument. "I think," said somebody one day, "I say without fear of contradiction that——" "Stop, sir," interrupted Sydney Smith. "Are you acquainted with Mr. Hallam?" Sydney Smith used to tell a story of his sitting by the bedside of the historian, who was suffering from influenza, when a watchman came by and called, "Twelve o'clock, and a starlight night!" That seemed a safe remark, but up jumped Hallam with, "I question that!—I question that! Starlight! I see a star, I admit; but I doubt whether that constitutes starlight!" Exhausted by this effort, Hallam lay still until the watchman again came by and cried, "Past two o'clock, and a cloudy

morning!" "I question that!—I question that!" cried the patient, rushing to the window, and throwing it open. "Watchman! do you mean to call this a cloudy morning? I see a star! And I question it being past two o'clock! I question it!—I question it!"

Rogers went but little into general society, but nothing could induce him to forgo the pleasure of being present at small gatherings of choice spirits. Once when he hurt his foot Planché feared he would not be present at a certain dinner-party. "Oh!" Luttrell reassured him, "he'll be here to-night for all that; that old man would go out with the rattles in his throat." There was some humour in Luttrell referring to Rogers as an old man, for there was only two years' difference in their ages. Rogers was, perhaps, happiest when entertaining at his house, 22, St. James's Place, where he resided from 1803, and where he gathered around him the best literary society. He knew every one. He was a friend of Fox, whom he visited at St. Anne's, and whom he apostrophised in his poem, "Human Life."

"Thee at St. Anne's so soon of care beguiled,
Playful, sincere, and artless as a child;
Thee who wouldst watch a bird's-nest on a spray,
Through the green lanes exploring day by day,

How oft from grove to grove, from seat to seat,
With thee conversing in thy loved retreat,
I saw the sun go down! Ah! then 'twas thine
Ne'er to forget some volume half-divine;
Shakespeare's or Dryden's, through the chequered shade,
Borne in thy hand behind thee as we strayed,
And where we sat (and many a halt we made)
To read there in a fervour all thine own,
And in thy grand and melancholy tone,
Some splendid passages, not to thee unknown,
Fit theme for long discourse."

He was intimate with Lord and Lady Holland, who christened a summer-house "Rogers's Seat," and inscribed on it a couplet by Lord Holland:

"Here Rogers sat, and here for ever dwell
With me those 'Pleasures' which he sang so well;"

and be numbered among his acquaintance; to mention at random a few names, Wordsworth, General Fitzpatrick; "Conversation" Sharp, to whom he frequently submitted his proof-sheets; Horne Tooke, Sir James Mackintosh, Brougham, Jeffrey, Hallam, Campbell; Lisle Bowles, the editor of Pope; Lord Dudley, Whishaw; Richard Cumberland, the dramatist who sat for Sir Fretful Plagiary in Sheridan's "Critic"; Sheridan himself, Henry Mackenzie, Gifford, Lord Erskine, Scott, John Hoppner, William Wyndham, Moore;

and Crabbe, whom he introduced to London society. Porson, too, was numbered among his acquaintance, and he and all his friends used their efforts to keep him sober. Porson dined one night with John Hoppner, and there was no wine at dinner, as Mrs. Hoppner had taken with her the keys of the cellar. After the repast Porson insisted that probably Mrs. Hoppner kept a bottle of spirits for her own use in the bedroom, a suggestion that the husband, convinced of his wife's abstemiousness, pooh-poohed. However, under pressure, he consented to look, and lo! a bottle was found, which Porson, who quickly disposed of the contents, declared to be very good gin. When the lady returned, Hoppner told her of the discovery and expressed his surprise—which, however, was nothing to Mrs. Hoppner's when she learnt that every drop had been drunk. "Good G—d!" she exclaimed. "It was spirits of wine for the lamp!"

How much of Rogers's literary reputation was the outcome of his famous breakfast-parties it would be cruel to inquire, nor is it advisable to ask how it came about that in 1850, after Wordsworth's death, he was offered the laureateship, which, however, he had the good sense to decline. In spite of the feebleness of his work, which, however,

gave him great trouble to produce,[1] he became generally recognised as the grand old man of letters, a post for which in some ways he was well fitted. Young authors sent their manuscripts to him for an opinion, those of assured position presented him with autographed copies of their publications—in which latter pleasure himself indulged freely.

"With equal good nature, good grace, and good looks,
As the devil gave apples, Sam Rogers gave books."

The recipients were not always grateful, and when he scattered broadcast copies of his magnificent "Italy," illustrated by Turner and Stothard, the production of which—for he published this, as most of his works, at his own expense—cost him seven thousand pounds, while Luttrell declared the poem "would have been *dished*, if it had not

[1] "He is not very well," the incorrigible Sydney Smith replied one day, when asked how Rogers was.

"Why, what is the matter?

"Oh, don't you know, he has produced a couplet? When our friend is delivered of a couplet, with infinite labour and pains, he takes to his bed, has straw laid down, the knocker tied up, and expects his friends to call and make inquiries, and the answer at the door invariably is, 'Mr. Rogers and his little couplet are as well as can be expected.' When he produces an Alexandrine, he keeps his bed a day longer."

been for the *plates*," another cruel man wrote, perverting Pope to his own ends:

> " See where the pictures for the page atone,
> And *Sam* is saved by beauties not his own."

To Rogers's credit, he succoured Sheridan when the great wit was on his deathbed, he replenished Haydon's ever-empty purse, he lent Campbell five hundred pounds to purchase a share in *The Metropolitan*, helped Moore in his Bermuda troubles, and obtained a pension for Cary, the translator of Dante. He started Moxon in business, and assisted Wordsworth, for whom he had secured a Distributorship of Stamps, to find a satisfactory publisher. He was, indeed, the Mecænas of his day. After the interrupted duel between Jeffrey and Moore, arising out of a criticism by the former of one of the latter's works, he made peace between the combatants, and when Moore, furious at Byron's allusion in " English Bards and Scotch Reviewers " to the meeting, sent his brother-poet a challenge, Rogers again acted as peace-maker. Byron's lines ran:

> " Can none remember that eventful day,
> That ever-glorious, almost fatal fray,
> When Little's leadless pistol met his eye,
> And Bow-street myrmidons stood laughing by; "

and this jocular allusion was particularly annoying, because it revived the story that Moore and Jeffrey had stood opposite each other with *unloaded* pistols. Moore declared that his weapon, at least, was regularly loaded, but there is no doubt Jeffrey's was charged only with powder and a paper pellet. Hook, too, made a now little known allusion to the incident:

"When Anacreon would fight, as the poets have said,
A reverse he displayed in his vapour,
For while all his poems were loaded with lead,
His pistols were loaded with paper.
For excuses Anacreon old custom may thank,
Such a *salvo* he should not abuse,
For the cartridge, by rule, is always made blank,
Which is fired away at *Reviews*."

Byron was for a long time on the best of terms with Rogers, as may be gathered from the verses already printed here beginning, "Absent or present, still to thee," which the younger man wrote on a blank leaf of a copy of "The Pleasures of the Memory" and from the fact that "The Giaour" was dedicated to "melodious Rogers." What caused the breach between them is unknown, but Rogers's offence must have been rank to provoke in Byron the bitterness shown in the following personal attack:

"QUESTION.

"Nose and chin would sham a knocker,
Wrinkles that would puzzle Cocker;
Mouth which marks the envious scorner,
With a scorpion in each corner,
Turning its quick tail to sting you,
In the place that most must wring you;
Eyes of lead-like hue and gummy,
Carcass picked from out some mummy;
Bowels (but they were forgotten
Save the liver, and that's rotten).
Skin all sallow, flesh all sodden,—
Form the Devil would fright God in.
Is't a corpse stuck up for show,
Galvanised at times to go?
With the Scripture in connection,
New proof of the resurrection,
Vampire, ghost, or ghoul, what is it?
I would walk ten miles to miss it.

"ANSWER.

"Many passengers arrest one,
To demand the same free answer.
Shorter 's my reply and franker—
That's the Bard, the *Beau*, the Banker.
Yet if you could bring about,
Just to turn him inside out,
Satan's self would seem less sooty,
And his present aspect—Beauty.
Mark that (as he masks the bilious
Air, so softly supercilious)

Chastened bow, and mock humility,
Almost sicken'd to servility ;
Hear his tone (which is to talking)
That which creeping is to walking ;
Now on all-fours, now on tip-toe) ;
Hear the tales he lends his lip to :—
Little hints of heavy scandals ;
Every friend in turn he handles ;
All which women, or which men do
Glides forth in an innuendo,
Clotted in odds and ends of humour—
Herald of each paltry rumour,
From divorces down to dresses,
Women's frailties, men's excesses,
All which life presents of evil
Make for him a constant revel.
You're his foe, for that he fears you,
And in absence blasts and tears you.
You're his friend, for that he hates you ;
First caresses, and then baits you :
Darting on the opportunity
When to do it with impunity.
You are neither,—then he'll flatter
Till he finds some bait for satire ;
Hunts your weak point out, then shows it
When it injures to disclose it,
In the mode that's most invidious,
Adding every trait that's hideous,
From the bile, whose blackening river
Rushes through his Stygian liver.
Then he thinks himself a lover :—
Why, I really can't discover

In his mind, age, face, or figure :
Viper-broth might give him vigour
Let him keep the cauldron steady,
He the venom has already.
For his faults he has but *one*—
'Tis but envy when all's done.
He but pays the pain he suffers,
Clipping, like a pair of snuffers,
Lights which ought to burn the brighter
For this temporary blighter.
He's the cancer of his species,
And will eat himself to pieces :
Plague personified, and famine ;
Devil, whose sole delight is damning !

" For his merits, would you know 'em ?
Once he wrote a pretty poem ! " [1]

Maginn, who thought these lines " well worth five dozen ' Parasinas ' and ' Prisoners of Chillon,' " remarked, " I would give a trifle to see Sam's face the morning that satire was published " ; and how deeply Rogers suffered under the castigation may be deduced from the fact that his first desire was to buy up the entire edition. What Rogers had done to merit the attack, only Rogers knew, and he did not discuss the matter ; but probably he had let his malicious tongue get the better of him,

[1] These lines were sent to Moore, who suppressed them ; but they appeared in *Fraser's Magazine*, vol. xxxvii. p. 81.

as was not infrequently the case. Since he was always at war with Lady Davy, he may perhaps be forgiven for his reply to her question uttered across a dinner-table, "Mr. Rogers, I am sure you are talking about me." "Lady Davy, I pass my life in defending you!" but there is less excuse for saying to Moore when inspecting the latter's dining-room, which was hung with portraits of Lord Grey, Lord John Russell, Lord Lansdowne, and others, "Why, you have all your *patrons* here!"

The truth is, the habit of saying bitter things is one which grows and, after a time, can scarcely be restrained: yet Campbell said when the conversation turned on Rogers's maliciousness, "Borrow five hundred pounds of him, and he will never say a word against you until you want to repay him." Yet, if Rogers, who had been disappointed in love, took his revenge by sneering at marriage, and declaring "it matters little whom a man marries, for he was sure to find the next morning he had married somebody else"; he had a tender place in his heart for children, and more than once said, "When I am old and bedridden I hope I shall be read to by young people—Walter Scott's novels, perhaps." Certainly he could, when he chose, pay charming compliments.

"Lord Holland always comes to breakfast like a man upon whom some sudden good fortune has just fallen," he said; and to Moore he remarked: "What a lucky fellow you are! Surely you must have been born with a rose in your lips, and a nightingale singing on the top of your head."

Whether Rogers ever provoked Theodore Hook by some bitter remark will never be known, but Hook took the poet for a butt in *John Bull*, and week by week irritated him by the ingenious, though not, perhaps, original, device of fathering upon him vulgar, feeble, and sometimes indecent jokes. Mr. Clayden, the biographer of Rogers, has found a mass of statements in that weekly Tory paper attributed to the poet, but, he gives the assurance, nothing amusing except the following lines:

"HUMAN LIFE.

"Cries Sam, 'All Human Life is frail,
E'en mine may not endure;
Then, lest it suddenly should fail,
I'll hasten to insure.'

"At Morgan's office[1] Sam arrived,
Reckoning without his host;
'Avaunt!' the frightened Morgan cried,
'I can't insure a ghost.'

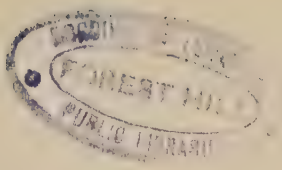
[1] William Morgan, a friend of Rogers, was the manager of the Equitable Insurance Office in Blackfriars.

" ' Zounds ! 'tis my poem, not my face ;
Here, list while I recite it.'
Said Morgan, ' Seek some other place,
I cannot underwrite it.' " [1]

It was Rogers's cadaverous countenance that, while it secured for him the nickname of "The Dead Dandy," gave Hook many opportunities for indulging his humour. "Rogers does not dare peep out of his [window] into the Green Park," wrote Joseph Jekyll on July 18, 1826, "as *John Bull* advertises that he is the person who lay dead under an avalanche for a century and a half." Hook it was who invented the story of Rogers hailing a coach in St. Paul's Churchyard, and the driver jeering, "Ho ! ho ! my man ; I'm not going to be had in that way : go back to your grave !" It was Hook, too, who at Byron's funeral warned Rogers to keep out of sight of the undertaker lest that functionary should claim him as one of his old customers. Familiar is the account of the consternation into which a company was thrown when a French valet, mistaking Rogers for Moore, who was expected, ushered in the former, announcing him as M. Le Mort ! Maginn began an appreciation of the banker-poet in *Fraser's Magazine*, "*De mortuis nil nisi bonum* ! There

[1] *John Bull*, March 7, 1824.

is Sam Rogers, a mortal likeness—painted to the very death!" and the accompanying caricature horrified Goethe, who exclaimed to Thackeray, "They would make me look like that!" Lord Dudley was fond of the theme. When Rogers told him he had been at Spa, and that the little town was so full that, being unable to get a bed, he had had to leave, "Dear me," exclaimed Lord Dudley, in a tone of concern, "was there no room in the churchyard?" Perhaps the best jest on the subject was uttered by Lord Alvanley, who, in a most matter-of-fact voice, asked Rogers, "Why, since you can well afford it, don't you keep your hearse?"



CHAPTER XXX

HENRY LUTTRELL

From a lithograph after Count d'Orsay, by courtesy of the Hon. Algernon Bourke.

HENRY LUTTRELL.

CHAPTER XXX

HENRY LUTTRELL[1]

NO man among the wits and *beaux* of society was so happy in his relations with the rest of his circle as Henry Luttrell, a natural son of Lord Carhampton.[2] Born in or about 1765,[3] his father's influence secured him a seat for Clonmines, county Wexford, in the Irish Parliament for 1798, and a post under the Irish government, that at the time of the Union between that country and Great Britain was commuted for a pension. Soon after, in 1802, he went to the West Indies to manage the very considerable estates of Lord Carhampton, but

[1] Born 1765, died 1851.

[2] Henry Lawes Luttrell, second Earl of Carhampton (1743–1821). Henry Luttrell's mother, says the *Dictionary of National Biography*, was probably the daughter of a gardener at Woodstock, named Harman.

[3] This date is generally accepted, but the *Gentleman's Magazine* for January 1866 (p. 148) notifying Luttrell's death in the previous month gives his age as seventy !

finding the climate disagreeable and the people uncongenial, he very soon returned to England, and, paying a visit to London, was introduced to metropolitan society by the Duchess of Devonshire.

Rarely has social recognition been so swiftly granted in the case of one whose wit was his sole claim to appreciation, for Luttrell was no *beau*, and he had the great disadvantage of being a poor man all his life. Not so impecunious, it is true, as, for instance, Tom Creevey, with his two hundred a year, upon which he contrived to live in a state of independence in the wealthiest circles; but still without means to enable him to entertain or indulge in the costlier amusements of his set. This, however, troubled him but little, for he had no tastes that his income could not satisfy. "Mr. Luttrell is a great walker, a great reader, and passionately fond of music," Harriet, Lady Granville noted. "This makes him independent half the day, and easily amused the other, and at dinner it is difficult to be more entertaining . . . [He is] agreeable to the greatest degree."[1] Lady Granville's opinion of Luttrell as an entertaining companion is borne out by many other persons.

[1] *Letters of Harriet, Lady Granville.*

Byron said he was "a most agreeable member of society, the best sayer of good things, and the most epigrammatic conversationalist I ever met; there is a terseness and wit, mingled with fancy in his observations, that no one else possesses, and no one so peculiarly understands the *à propos*." But Byron had yet higher praise to bestow upon this subject of his encomiums. "Unlike all, or most other wits, Luttrell is never obtrusive," he added, when writing to Lady Blessington: "even the choicest *bon-mots* are only brought forth when perfectly applicable, and then are given in a tone of good breeding which enhances their value."

Indeed, all are agreed as to Luttrell's merits as a wit. Sir Walter Scott breakfasted with Rogers in the autumn of 1826, to meet "the great London wit"; Rogers declared there was "no man in London society who could slide a brilliant thing into general conversation with equal readiness"; and he added, "There is this difference between Luttrell and [Sydney] Smith: after Luttrell you remembered what good things he said—after Smith you merely remembered how much you laughed." Lady Morgan found him "odd, but clever and pleasant"; and even Charles Greville wrote kindly of him. "It is

hardly possible to live with a more agreeable man than Luttrell," that usually caustic critic has stated. "He is difficult to please, but when pleased and in good spirits, full of vivacity. He has a lively imagination, a great deal of instruction, and a very retentive memory. . . . He is extremely sensitive, easily disconcerted, and resents want of tact in others, because he is so liable to suffer from any breach of it. A sceptic in religion, and by no means austere in morals, he views with indulgence all faults except those which are committed against society, but he looks upon a bore with unconcealed aversion. . . . Detesting the importance and the superiority which are assumed by those who have only riches or rank to boast of, he delights in London, where such men find their proper level, and where genius and ability always maintain an ascendency over pomp, vanity, and the adventitious circumstances of birth and position. . . . He is very witty and says excellent things, brilliant in general society and pleasant in *tête-à-tête.* Many men infinitely less clever *converse* more agreeably than he does, because he is too epigrammatic, and has accustomed himself so much to make brilliant observations that he cannot easily descend to quiet, unlaboured talk. This only applies to him

when in general society; when alone with another person he talks as agreeably as possible."

The highest compliment was paid him by Lady Blessington, who said that, while the conversation of many others only amused her, that of Mr. Luttrell made her think. Indeed, under the motley of the diner-out he was a man of great good sense and sound observation, with a very sincere and hearty hatred of shams.

> 'O! that there might in England be
> A duty on Hypocrisy!
> A tax on humbug, an excise
> On solemn plausibilities.
> No income-tax, if these were granted
> *Need* be endured, or *could* be wanted;
> Nay—Van,[1] with an overflowing chest,
> Might soon abolish all the rest!" [2]

He could blaze with caustic wit and repartee, as we shall see, but he had a kindly heart, and, the friend of Moore, Thomas Campbell, Wordsworth, Hood, Sydney Smith, and Rogers, he had a keen appreciation of their merits—it has been recorded how once at Holland House he let the

[1] Nicholas Vansittart, first Baron Bexley (1766–1851), Chancellor of the Exchequer 1812–1823.

[2] Luttrell: *Advice to Julia.*

side-dishes pass in order to contemplate a man who had failed to laugh at Sydney Smith's jokes!

A favourite in social and literary circles almost as soon as he settled in London, his *bon-mots* were on all lips. Indeed, it is difficult to write of him without overloading the pages with his brilliant quips and sparkling epigrams.

When Tom Moore remarked of Richard ("Conversation") Sharp, who had been a wholesale hatter, and had a dingy complexion, that "he looked as if the dye of his old trade had got engrained in his face," Luttrell said, "it was darkness that might be *felt*!"

Felicitous was his choice of epithets when informed that the Bishop of —— was expected to dinner at a house where Luttrell was staying. "The Bishop of ——!" he exclaimed. "Mercy on me! I don't mix well with the Dean, and I shall positively effervesce with the Bishop!" He paid another bishop a doubtful compliment, when, after having paid a round of country-house visits, at a time when some Church question was on the *tapis*, on his return he told his friends, "I found myself quite put out by the theological talk that prevailed in every house I have visited—except in that perfect gentleman's, the

Bishop of ——'s, where the subject never occurred!"[1]

There was sound philosophy underlying his reply to Rogers, who, when they were passing in a wherry under old London Bridge, just before it was pulled down, remarked: "Some very sensible men think that the removal of these narrow arches will cause such a rush of water as will be dangerous."

"My dear Rogers," said his companion, "if some sensible men had been attended to, we should still be eating acorns."

His description of the English climate has passed into the quotation-books. It was, he remarked, "on a fine day, like looking up a chimney; on a rainy day, like looking down it." It was he, and no other, who made the historic retort at one of Lady Holland's crowded dinner-parties when, on the arrival of another guest, the hostess requested the company "to make room": "It certainly must be *made*, for it does not exist!" When Moore observed of a rather flighty young girl, that her mother and father were "afraid to let her off the premises," Luttrell added, "for fear, I suppose, that she should come to the *conclusion*." Luttrell,

[1] Lord Houghton: *Monographs.*

however, was not always malicious or satirical in his comments, and he could turn a very pretty compliment when he wished to do so, as witness this couplet to Miss Tree :

> " On this Tree if a nightingale settles and sings,
> This Tree will return her as good as she brings."

No man enjoyed fooling more than Luttrell, and often his indulgence in this agreeable amusement was set forth in rhyme. He wrote to Moore the following lines *à propos* of " Lallah Rookh " in the name of Rogers, whose poem, " Human Life," [1] Lord Lauderdale was said to have by heart :

> " I'm told, dear Moore, your lays are sung
> (Can it be true, you lucky man ?)
> By moonlight in the Persian tongue
> Along the streets of Ispahan.
> 'Tis hard, but one reflection cures
> At once a jealous poet's smart :
> The Persians have translated yours,
> But Lauderdale has mine by heart."

When a man was run over by an omnibus, Luttrell improvised a verse :

> " Killed by an omnibus—why not ?
> So quick a death a boon is.

[1] Sydney Smith, writing of " Human Life," states : " The Hollands have read Rogers's poem and like it—Luttrell approves."

Let not his friends lament his lot,—
Mors omnibus communis."

Luttrell was a *gourmet*, as may be gathered from his much-quoted saying that, "the man who says he does not like a good dinner is either a fool or a liar." Sydney Smith, writing in 1832 from Combe-Florey to Lady Morley, congratulated himself that "Our soups had the full approbation of Luttrell; he declared himself perfectly satisfied with the fish department."[1] Less fortunate was Moore one day, who set before the *connoisseur* a very ill-dressed dinner, which, "the poet admits, was rather provoking, as Luttrell is particular about the *cuisine*"; but it is pleasant to learn that the *contretemps* had no effect either on the wit or good-humour of the guest, "for," says the host, "he was highly agreeable." Luttrell and Nugent walked home that night with the assistance of Moore's lantern; and the next morning the latter sent a rhymed apology for the repast, to which Luttrell at once replied:

"A fine feast is a farce and a fable,
As often, dear Moore, we have found it;
Prithee, what is the fare on a table
To the Fair who sit sparkling around it?

[1] Reid: *Life and Times of Sydney Smith.*

"I see not what you'd be to blame for,
Though your cook were no dab at her duty;
In your cottage was all that we came for,
Wit, poetry, friendship, and beauty!

"And then, to increase our delight
To a fullness all boundaries scorning,
We were cheer'd with your lantern at night,
And regaled with your rhymes the next morning."

Luttrell's talent for *jeux d'esprit* was so marked that his friends persuaded him to attempt some light but more sustained work; and in 1820 he issued that airy trifle, "Advice to Julia: A Letter in Rhyme." This was a brief sketch of contemporary society, and was greeted with a very hearty welcome: almost the single exception to the chorus of praise it evoked was a review in the *Quarterly*, generally supposed to have been written by Gifford. Rogers carried this about under his arm, and said sadly to every one he met: "Poor Luttrell, it's all over with him, he can never look up again. He never can stand it, not being blessed with a particularly good temper!" It is comforting to have Lady Granville's assurance that "Mr. Luttrell, however, does look up, and is preparing another long poem for the press." [1]

[1] *Letters of Harriet, Lady Granville*—October 9, 1820.

"Advice to Julia," which some wit rechristened "Letters of a Dandy to a Dolly," won the suffrages not only of the general reading public, but also of such cultured critics as "Christopher North," who pronounced it "quite a *bijou*"; Byron, who thought it "pointed and witty and full of observation, showing in every line a knowledge of society and a tact rarely met with"; and Moore, who described it as "full of well-bred facetiousness and sparkle of the very first water," and declared it was "what few could have done half so well." The modern reader, perhaps, will discern in these tributes the unconscious influence upon the writers of the author's delightful personality, and, himself being wholly unprejudiced, will not be inclined to accord it such high praise. It is not to be compared with Anstey's "New Bath Guide," which falls within the same category of playful social satire, nor has it the daintiness that characterised most of Locker Lampson's verses—to give an instance, "St. James's Street"; but it has undeniable merit as a social epic of a minor order, and it throws a valuable light upon the costume and manners of the day in which it was written. The reader of these volumes has had the opportunity to peruse several short passages descriptive of social

life from this now almost forgotten poem; but it would be unfair to say farewell to it without quoting the humorous appreciation of London that is, perhaps, the gem of the composition:

"LONDON! thou comprehensive word,
What joy thy streets and squares afford!
And think not thy admirer rallies,
If he should add thy lanes and alleys!
Thy independence let me share,
Though clogged with smoke and foggy air;
Though I'm obliged my doors to make fast,
Though I can get no cream for breakfast;
Though knaves, within thee, cheat and plunder,
And fires can scarcely be kept under;
Though quite enough of force and fraud,
By Bow and Marlborough-street unawed,
At home besets us, and abroad;
And many a rook finds many a pigeon
In law and physic, and religion,
Eager to help a thriving trade on,
And proud and happy to be preyed on.
What signify such paltry blots?
The glorious sun himself has spots."

Luttrell followed the "Advice to Julia" with a similar effusion, entitled "Crockford House," in 1827, but this was generally admitted to be inferior to its predecessor. Even while admitting the good points of the first-named work, there is no doubt that his literary work was not

so brilliant as his spoken words; and though we have it on the authority of Moore that Luttrell's (unpublished) diary was exceedingly clever, it cannot be doubted that in his printed performances he did little justice to his talents. In his element as a talker, he was of course always in demand in society, and he could rarely bring himself to refuse an invitation, though he complained that he had all his life "a love for domestic comfort," though passing his time in such a different manner, "like that King of Bohemia who had so unluckily a passion for navigation, though condemned to live in an inland town!"[1] He married in 1825 Antonine, daughter of Monsieur Didin of Paris, in which city he died after a lingering illness on December 19, 1851. "It was wonderful to see how little he minded a confinement of two years, the last nine months of which, and especially the last three, his sufferings were, at times, very acute and painful to witness," Rogers wrote when the end had come; "yet, whenever he was free from that sad neuralgic pain, his bright mind shone forth with some little spirited joke, to cheer those around him."

[1] Moore: *Journal*, August 2, 1821.

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